

A NIGHT WITH THE BOOBIES.

A WEST INDIAN SKETCH.



RKDONDA is a small island, about mid-channel between Montserrat and Nevis, and in appearance is very much like a haystack, except that its summit is quite green. In fact, though called an island, it is nothing more than an uninhabited rock, about three miles in circumference; and is chiefly remarkable from its being the breeding-place of numberless sea-birds, of the pelican species, which, from their extreme stupidity, are called Boobies.

In the month of March, 1857, the brig *Lion* was at anchor in Plymouth roads, Montserrat, waiting for cargo; but the season having been backward, no cargo had yet arrived. We had done all that we could to pass away the time, and find work for the hands. We had "stripped ship," mended every bit of canvas that could be mended, and refitted everything that could be refitted; and now there was nothing left to occupy the men's time but the sailors' busy idleness—picking oakum and knotting yarns.

It was early morning, and the decks had been washed and holystoned, and everything cleaned and polished. The men were amusing themselves by washing and shaving, scrubbing trousers, patching old dunnage, and such like; while I, weary of turning out and turning in, without any more definite object in view than getting through the day, was lazily lolling on the bulwarks, looking

up at the soaring peaks of the mountains which the clouds now enveloped, and now disclosed, giving full scope to the imagination to indulge in visions of grandeur, which would hardly have been realised had the whole been presented to the view.

The prospect before me was in the highest degree interesting, if not positively magnificent. There was the grey town of Plymouth sleeping, as it were, on the margin of the sea; such a lovely sea, too, as in the temperate latitudes is rarely seen, holding the island like a gem in its pure bosom, and mirroring there the vessels at anchor, the moving boats, and the varied shore. Farther on was the high cliff, the old fort jutting out from its side, and the towering hills of the Soufrière in the distance. From the town, upwards, was one gentle acclivity, covered with beautifully cultivated estates, and the most lovely verdure. A succession of small valleys, covered with cane patches and pasture, intermingled with slight elevations, upon which here and there the planters' mountain ponies could be distinguished; nestling beneath which could be seen clusters of neat-looking huts, the negroes' villages forming the foreground of the picture; while the original beauty of the landscape was enhanced and diversified by the various hues of the crops just approaching maturity. The bright and gorgeous colours that light up a West Indian landscape have no parallel in the temperate

zone, and language is poor, too poor to describe them. Fancy the bright yellow tint of the ripening canes, contrasting with the deep green of the Indian corn, which at this season is just beginning to spear, and this again varied by the luxuriant Guinea grass, groves of small trees, and clumps of waving cocoa-nut trees; the prospect being terminated by the lofty mountains, covered with an immense forest, the outlines of which melted into the distant peaks, and these again were lost in the clouds.

I was awakened from my reverie by "eight bells" being struck, and the hands going to breakfast. The trees faded away, the mountains vanished! and in their stead behold rising before me those marine luxuries, soft bread—*tack* we call it—and new milk.

"What on earth shall we do to get through the day?" I exclaimed, as I was seated at the breakfast-table.

"Can't tell," replied my friend Carey, who was deep in the mysteries of corned beef and chilies.

"It's a fine morning for a sail, sir. Shall I tell them to get the long-boat under weigh?" said the boy who was waiting at the breakfast-table.

As the sea-breeze had just set in, and as anything was a change after the monotony of nothing to do and nowhere to go, I said "Yes." The boy then suggested Redonda. I fancied that there must be a very splendid view from the summit of the rock; and as I wanted, also, to know something of the habits of the innumerable sea-birds that inhabited it, I ordered some provisions to be put into the boat, and with three men, and Tom, the apprentice, we started for Booby Island.

After the eternal sameness of a life on board a ship at anchor, there was something inspiring in the very motion of the boat, and the rushing of the transparent water past us, as she plunged through it, scattering the foam from her bows as we sped onward.

We bowled along for about half an hour, and I enjoyed it vastly. A light feathery cloud partially obscured the sun, and caused the temperature to be less oppressive than is usual in these latitudes; while the breeze from the Atlantic blew fresh and cool as on a May morning in England. I seemed to have left all the languor and listlessness of the tropics behind me, and, for the time, felt the strength, the spirits, and the elasticity of youth return to me.

We were now fast approaching Redonda, above which was to be seen a cloud of boobies, whitening the sky with their numbers, and filling the air with their wailing cries.

Boobies, as I have before observed, are so called from their remarkable stupidity. They seem to have no sense, not even the instinct of self-preservation, for they will suffer themselves to be killed without moving a peg, and they will see their next neighbours knocked on the head without any sign of fear, or any attempt to preserve themselves from a similar fate. They fly, or rather wheel about in the air, with their necks extended, and their wings almost motionless. Naturalists tell us that they have the power, by means of inflation, of rising without moving their

wings; and to all appearance this is the case. Their cry is something between that of a goose and a raven, and is of a peculiarly wailing, melancholy description; and this, with the solitude of the rocks and rugged nature of the scenery that presented itself to my view as we approached the island, seemed to impress me with a sad sort of presentiment. I could not get rid of this feeling; and, though I thought at the time it was exceedingly foolish, yet I am willing to confess that afterwards I had reason to think differently.

The view of Redonda from the windward side was magnificent; but at the same time it was the magnificence of desolation, of chaos. At the base large masses of rock, piled one on the other in the grandest disorder, jutted out from the main island, against which the long swell of the Atlantic beats with tremendous violence, and, then thundering against the cliff, sent the spray clean over it.

We sailed round the island, and then lay to leeward of the rock, seeking for a place to land in safety. I should think no one previous to our ascent had ever taken the trouble to reach the summit of this rock, for, to all appearance, there was no path whereby we could ascend; the cliff seemed to me to be nothing but an abrupt precipice perfectly inaccessible to man. However, sailors are not the sort of fellows to be disheartened by difficulties or dangers, and so after a more careful survey I found a place where I thought we could ascend; but how to land without injury to the boat was the next thing that puzzled me. The swell from seaward rose and fell in long undulating masses, and as they swept back, disclosed a quantity of sunken rocks, which threatened instant destruction to the boat if she touched on them.

I anchored clear of the rocks, and then sent a hand on shore with a line; and by hauling on this, and at the same time veering out cable, we were enabled to get the boat alongside a ledge of rocks; but even then our landing was attended with considerable danger. The swell coming round from both sides of the island met just at the point chosen for our embarkation, and rushing along the side of the cliff took the boat on its calm but treacherous bosom, and would have dashed her into pieces against the rocky cliff if we had not held on at these moments by the cable. As it was we had to watch our opportunity, and jump on shore in a smooth; but even then it required care and judgment, for if we had jumped on a receding wave we should have certainly missed our footing and been violently dashed against the rocks by the next recurrent wave. It required us to jump with the rising of the sea while our body had an upward motion, and as soon as we landed we had to scramble up to the next ledge to prevent our being carried back again by the underdraught of the following sea. It may be imagined from this that none but sailors would have succeeded in effecting a landing: and after we had landed, it occurred to me that it was not safe to leave the boat without some one to take care of her, and I ordered the boy back into her. I shall never forget the poor lad's countenance when he was told he was not to go with us; and if I could consistently with our safety have left the boat unattended, I would have taken him.

As it was, however, although evidently much chagrined, his sense of duty would not let him show it, and he jumped into the boat with alacrity. Slacking off the spring, and hauling on the cable, the boat was once more got into deep water.

And now came the ascent. If any one can imagine a nearly precipitous cliff with no other means of preserving ourselves from falling among the rocks than an occasional ledge on which we could rest, after having, cat-like, dragged ourselves up to them by sheer muscular strength, he will be able to form some idea of the dangers we had to encounter in our zig-zag ascent.

By the time we reached the top we were all quite exhausted, and sat down to get breath. What a view lay before us! The spot where we sat was the easternmost headland, a sort of promontory jutting out into the sea, and before us was the mighty ocean—its blue interminable vista glittering in the sunbeams—roughened by a stiff tropical breeze; while the swell from the offing came tumbling in towards us in long blue undulations, which, breaking against the rocks with the greatest impetuosity, cast their spray within a few feet of us, and caused a noise as though subterraneous thunder, pent up in the bowels of the earth, was seeking to burst its bonds; but, stay, the voice of the mighty ocean thundering upon a rocky coast must be heard, seen, nay, felt, to be understood—it cannot be adequately described.

Turning from this to the naked, storm-scarred, and sun-baked island, my old feeling of despondency returned to me. I never saw anything so barren and naked, the short stunted grass only making its barrenness more noticeable. How my heart rose within me as on again turning I saw the bright array of beautiful islands which lay dotted before me: Montserrat, with its grassy slopes descending to the edge of the sea, looking like an emerald in the midst of the blue waves, the white beach fringed with magnificent palms, whose featherly plumage falling from their tall stems could just be discovered with the naked eye; Nevis rising pyramidal from the sea, its summit just piercing the white cloud that everlastingly rests there; St. Kitt's rising behind it, with its Mountain of Misery towering above everything; Antigua, ramparted by its magnificent cliff, standing midway between; and far away in the distance Guadalupe, with its broad, irregular eminences looming indistinctly like a great continent.

It was a beautiful scene, the sky above us was such a heavenly blue, while the deep green of the sea was thickly speckled with the white crests of the waves, and the tiny sails of the droppers, which skimmed along in the offing, ever and anon disappearing behind one of the islands, only to appear again on the other side, and then fade away in the distance.

What a contrast was the island itself to this! I cannot imagine a more naked or desolate spot in the world, and the melancholy feeling I experienced when I first saw it, now took firm hold of me. I seemed weighed down by some impending calamity, and though I tried, I could not shake it off.

The only thing really noticeable on the island

itself was the immense quantity of young boobies. They were crowded so thick on the ground, that in some places we could not pass without kicking or treading on them. They did not evince the slightest fear; they stuck their bills into our legs pretty freely, but move they would not. They were all covered with a beautiful soft white down, and I felt a great inclination to take back a couple with us; but the little wretches pecked us so, that I was obliged to give up the idea.

As there was nothing on the island but boobies, I may as well give a description of them. Boobies, then, are in size somewhat larger than a gull, and are of the same species as the pelican. They are to be met with in great abundance on the solitary rocks and keys in the West Indies. It would be difficult to describe their plumage, as it varies so much that a description of one individual bird would only mislead. However, I may say that they have generally a whitish body, with wing-feathers marked, in various manners, with black and brown; the bill is black and yellow, and their legs, which are short, are also yellow.

There being nothing more to be seen on the island, I gave the word to return. As soon, however, as we got within hail of our landing-place, we were startled by a loud hallooing from the boat. Our consternation can be well imagined, when, on reaching the edge of the cliff, we saw that the boat had broken adrift, and was momentarily in danger of being dashed to pieces among the rocks. It appeared that the cable, coming in contact with the sharp points of the rocks, had chafed through, and the boat, as it swung by its fastening on the shore, was in a very perilous position. Every swell that lifted her sent her surging up among the rocks; and now, as the water receded, we could hear her bump on them; her planks rending, and her timber cracking, as she settled down. It was evidently all up with her, and all we could do now was to save our provisions, and get the boy Tom on shore.

Disencumbering ourselves of our clothes, we all as if by instinct plunged in, and swam to the wreck. The swell was sweeping it in nearer to the cliff every moment, and the poor boy on board seemed paralysed with fear, and incapable of doing anything. It was no easy thing to approach the boat, as the sunken rocks were numerous, and a blow from one of them as we sank into the trough of the sea would have put an end to our earthly troubles. However, watching our opportunity, we got within a short distance of the wreck, when a huge swell, larger than any I had yet seen, swept in, and carrying us all within a few feet of the cliff, burst over the boat and launched the poor lad into the abyss of waters. For some seconds we could not see anything of him, and I thought he was lost—dashed violently against the rocks, and sunk to rise no more. At last, with feelings of joy, we saw him struggling manfully with the raging waters. But now a new peril assailed him—the current which ran by the island was carrying him out to sea, and his destruction seemed inevitable. The current ran so strong, that the stoutest swimmers could not make head against it, and we were all petrified.

The poor boy, seeing himself carried away like a cork, called out in the most heart-rending tones for help. I never heard anything so agonising as that cry for help, and we could render none.

Hitherto we had done nothing to aid him, though he was struggling with all his strength against the impetuous tide; but now one of the men, with a noble disregard of self, which I glory to say is the great characteristic of British seamen, dashed boldly after him. The poor boy, though nearly exhausted, no sooner saw him, than hope gave him new strength, and he breasted the tide more vigorously than ever. Swimming with the current soon brought the man within hail of him, and they then turned, and swam across the tide, and to our great astonishment we now saw them taken by an eddy of the current and carried back towards us as swiftly as they were before carried away from us. Now aiding and now encouraging him, the man brought the gallant boy nearer and nearer to the landing-place. Several times they were whirled round and carried almost to the edge of the current, but the Almighty, who cares for the meanest of his creatures, preserved them from this danger, and the poor boy was landed in safety, but he fainted as soon as he was hauled up on to the landing-place.

Fortunately we had some rum left in our bottle, and I soon restored the younger to his senses by pouring down his throat a good quantity of the cheering spirit. He was a tall lad of his age, and handsome withal, although slightly made. I could not help noticing his figure as he lay almost in an unconscious state. He had no shoes or stockings on, and his very wide trowsers, which in fact was all the covering he had on, he having thrown off his jacket and shirt when the boat broke adrift, showed a finely-shaped leg, full of sinew and muscle; while his sun-burnt face contrasted finely with his broad chest and beautifully moulded neck and shoulders. His forehead was high, and his form, though muscular, had all the plumpness of a woman.

Having served out a good caulkier of old rum, we next proceeded to look after the boat. It was now about half-past four, and I could see that the tide was falling fast, and that in a short time the boat would be high and dry. The swell too was subsiding, the breeze having decreased as evening approached, and we had every prospect of saving our provisions, as well as getting the mast and sails to make a tent. At length the tide had so far ebbed that we could reach the boat. I found her bilged, and nearly full of water, and that she was firmly imbedded between two rocks. It was therefore no use thinking of making her serviceable. Happily for us, she had been got ready for a drogging expedition, and was well supplied with necessaries. Besides a quantity of provisions, which for the most part were dry, we found a couple of tarpaulins and a lot of old sails, a quantity of coals, and a cooking stove and iron pot. My first care was to get all these safe on the top; and we then with a small crow-bar, which we found in her bows, and a stout shovel, broke up the boat, and took her materials up to our perch among the boobies. I do not think we lost anything, for the boy's jacket and shirt were

found hanging to one of the rocks, the shirt actually dried ready to put on. It is a very easy thing to say we got all these things up; but it may be imagined that if we found it difficult to ascend in the morning when we had nothing to encumber us, we found it much more so now. But give sailors a line, a spar, and a block, and they will soon rig themselves a purchase by means of which they could overcome greater difficulties than we had to surmount.

Having got our stores together, we went to work to make ourselves a tent. The day was waning fast, and it would not do to be very particular, so we dug a hole and stuck the mainmast in end, with the halyards rove; and then lashing the fore and main lugs together, and making the halyards fast in mid-ships, we pegged the foot down to the ground, and then hauled the halyard taut; and behold, we had a first-rate tent, though open at both ends. This was soon obviated by making one of the spare sails fast to one end; and covering the ground with the tarpaulins, and then laying down the old sails, we had a house that was not to be sneezed at.

While we had been thus engaged, the boy Tom, now perfectly recovered from his sousing, had got a fire under weigh, and had made some coffee; salt junk and hard biscuits were also placed before us, and we commenced operations with great zeal and determination. The biscuits vanished by dozens, and the huge mahogany-like junks of beef disappeared as if they had been the tenderest chickens. I am sure that none of us ever made a better or more comfortable meal, and when we wound up with a stiffish glass of grog and a pipe I felt quite exhilarated.

It would have been an interesting sight to have seen us seated on the top of this barren rock surrounded by the débris of our boat, and environed by boobies in all stages of maturity. The old ones were quietly nestling on their eggs, but the young ones were squabbling woefully because some one had intruded on their premises. The fact was, that we had dislodged a great number to erect our tent, and there was a perfect skirmish for places.

I make no doubt the old ones were greatly surprised at having their domains invaded in such an unceremonious fashion, for they kept flying over our heads, passing and repassing, and looking at us in a most impudent manner; now sailing past us in a smooth, noiseless flight, coming so near that the motion of the eye and every feather could be seen, the bird being all the time motionless, except a slight inclination of the head when opposite you. Then, as some new-comers arrived from seaward, the whole fraternity would rise in a cloud, and kick up such a row as would have frightened all the old women in Christendom into fits if they could have heard it.

And now the sun reached the horizon, and its purple glory spread like a carpet over both sea and land; even the scanty grass which grew on the island, tinged with its rich colouring, looked like a velvet mantle, clothing its barren carcass with beauty. All nature seemed hushed. A bank of clouds hung away to the southward, their

edges gilded by the declining sun, towering upward and spanning, as it were, the highest arch of the blue empyrean ; while the whole mass, like a gloomy canopy, crept slowly on and on, till suddenly the western horizon assumed a dusky purple hue, the sun set, and darkness was upon us.

In the darkness—which to us was more intense from its suddenness—the fire glanced bright and red, and as we sat by it we looked doubtless more like a band of pirates than a company of honest men. Hitherto we had borne all our misfortunes with the greatest equanimity ; but now our comfort was threatened by a swarm of sandflies and mosquitoes entering our tent and attacking us with great fury. All we could do we could not protect ourselves from these blood-sucking rascals. If any one, not a subject of their attack, could have seen us he would have grinned rarely at our insane attempts to rid ourselves of these pigmy enemies. Our blood had been heated and the perspiration still clung to our skin ; consequently the bite of these wretches was doubly poisonous, and in half-an-hour our own mothers could not have recognised us. It was thwack ! whack ! every second ; but as to killing them it was out of the question, and our only resource was to smoke them out—which, happily, answered our expectations.

And now the clouds, driven by the usual current of the trade-winds, gradually rose like a curtain, and the blue vault of heaven was disclosed to us, spangled with innumerable stars. Slowly, as though the liquid splendour of the moon would dazzle our vision, the dark curtain lifted, and the pale crystal light of her beams sparkling on the waters made a bright track on the now tranquil sea. The extreme clearness of the heavens, the soft serenity of the air, the buzzing of innumerable insects, and the delightful sensation produced by a pipe of fragrant tobacco, contributed in a great degree to tranquillise my feelings, which had been sadly disturbed by the mosquitoes.

I could not get up resolution to turn in, the night was so transcendently beautiful ; to the whole of the heavenly bodies shone out with a peculiar radiance, and the planets hung like globes of liquid fire, gem-like, in the firmament. The moonbeams, too, were so bright that I almost think, had I possessed a book, I could have read it by her light.

Sleep to me being apparently out of the question, I lighted another pipe, and covering myself with my dread-nought coat I lay down to enjoy the coolness of the evening breeze which had just set in. I tried several times to compose myself to sleep, but the fellows snored so I could not accomplish it. At last, I suppose I did ; but I had such strange fancies, or rather dreams, that it was worse than no sleep at all. At one time I fancied the whole island had been swept away by the current, and I was in the greatest trepidation lest it should topple over, and we should all be drowned in our sleep. Then I was tossing about among the breakers, and whirling in eddies, and fancied I saw huge black bodies coming towards me, and that I was struggling to avoid contact with them ; at another time I heard some one as distinctly as possible hailing me, and I awoke with so violent a start that I nearly broke my head.

I felt as though my mind had been wandering, but I could not rouse myself sufficiently to get rid of these fancies.

I must have been asleep some hours when I awoke—or rather thought so—and was surprised to see a man of lofty stature standing in the opening of the tent. I started and cried :—

“Hello ! who are you, my friend ?”

But the fellow did not answer ; he only held up his finger as if to enjoin silence.

At this moment I felt convinced I heard the most piercing shrieks for help, and, rising, I attempted to push past the fellow, but he was gone, and the next instant I had missed my footing, and was falling from the top of the cliff. The moment I touched the water I shouted loudly for help. A rough hand was placed on my shoulder, and a voice called out :—

“Hello, sir ! hello ! what's the matter ?”

I rubbed my eyes and looked about me.

“Confound the nightmare !” quoth I, and turned over and went to sleep again.

It was early morning when I really did awake, for the boobies made such a noise that I could not sleep any longer. When I arose I was startled by the extraordinary appearance of the morning. During the night a cloud or sort of luminous fog had settled on the top of the island, and the effect of this was, that while over-head and on the island all was in shadow, at the base of the cliff and out at sea the sun shone brightly. As the sun got power the thick white mantle seemed to be suddenly rent in twain, and the clear blue heavens and the sparkling waters were disclosed to our view.

As soon as we had finished our breakfast I set to work and erected a flag-staff, and hoisted the ensign, union down, in the hope of attracting some of the coasters as they passed.

The day was hot—blazing hot ; not a cloud was to be seen ; the ocean was like one vast polished mirror wherein the sun's burning rays were reflected, giving back bright, blinding flashes which dazzled the eyes and made the head swim. A sort of misty blue haze hung over the shadowy islands, whose outline seemed almost blended with the sky. There was no horizon, for the sky and the sea were so much alike you could not tell the one from the other.

In vain I looked towards Montserrat in the hope of succour from the brig. Several times I fancied I could hear the noise of oars moving regularly in the row-locks, and jumped up, hoping to see a boat in the offing ; but, though we saw several white specks lying lazily under the lee of the island, nothing came within sight of our signal.

About noon everything was still—deadly still—even the very boobies were still, and their clamour had entirely ceased. The usual sea-breeze had not set in, and the vertical sun poured its rays with such an intensity on the island that it seemed to send up a thin smoke from the extreme violence of the heat. Mid-day had long passed, and no sign of any assistance. Our water was getting short. I did not, however, feel uneasy on that point, as I felt sure from the first that there was some to be found on the island ; and so it turned

ont; for, on sending out two hands to search for it, they soon returned with intelligence that they had found a large pond of fresh water within a quarter of a mile of the tent.

It must not be imagined that because the course of events had prevented me from dwelling on our anything but enviable condition, that it had not been a subject of great uneasiness to me. During the whole of that day—and it appeared awfully long—we had been on the look-out for assistance from the brig. I had kept my glass almost constantly to my eye in the hope of seeing some one out in search of us. At last, towards afternoon, I saw a dark speck which rounded the western extremity of Montserrat, and for some time I thought it was coming towards us. It eventually turned out to be a boat. I was on tip-toe of excitement, and we tried all sorts of devices to make the colours fly, so as to attract their attention. At last they got so near that I could make out that it was the brig's pinnace, and that she was constantly cruising about in search of us, and we shouted with all our might; but it was a most ridiculous thing, for the boat was at least five miles from us, and therefore we were only shouting to the winds.

It is not easy for me to express the joy we experienced as the boat seemed to near us; but it will be still less easy to depict our consternation when we saw her suddenly bear up and return to Montserrat. Gradually she vanished from our sight, and the feeling we experienced as we saw her disappear was dreadful. Not that we were in any danger of starvation, or any of those extreme miseries which shipwrecked mariners often are exposed to, for we had plenty of water, and we could always make a meal of boobies, though their flesh is rather tough and fishy, or, following the tactics of the frigate-bird, make them disgorge

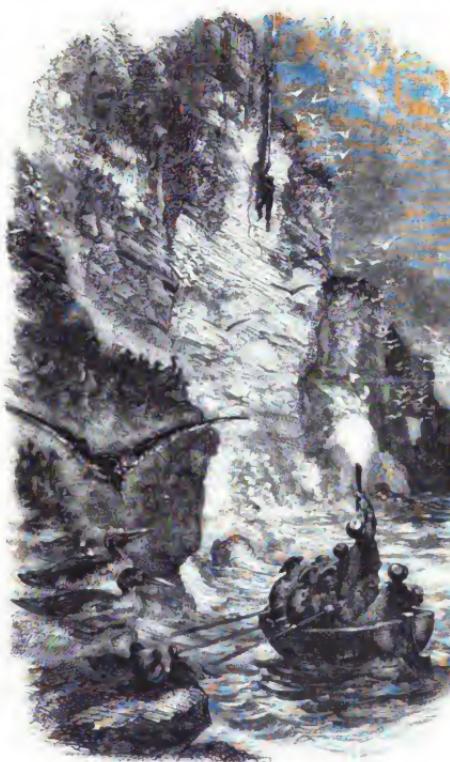
as soon as they land, and thereby get a good meal of fish. But it was the suspense and inconvenience. In short, no one who had not been placed in a similar situation could have any idea of the fretful inquietude I experienced when I saw what, to us, appeared our last chance vanishing from our view.

The shades of evening again closed around us;

not a craft of any description had passed the island during the day. When night came, and no assistance was to be expected, a thought struck me which I instantly acted on. Collecting all the débris of the boat, I set fire to it in the hope that it might attract attention and bring us succour. The wood being well-seasoned and saturated with pitch and tar blazed up into such a huge volume of flame that I felt sure it could not only be seen at Montserrat, but also at Guadaloupe. The higher the flames rose, the higher rose our spirits, and I only wondered none of us had thought of this device before. I walked about on the brow of the cliff in the greatest perturbation of mind, listening for any sound that would indicate succour; but none came,

and we all sat down to our frugal suppers with feelings of great despondency.

Just as we were thinking of turning in for the night, and as the last expiring embers of the fire were slowly dying out, we heard—or rather thought we heard—a shout; at first faint, as it were the booming of the sea, but which momentarily became louder and nearer. And then, to our joy and satisfaction, there suddenly shot up a bright blue flame, in the glare of which we could perceive two boats coming to our rescue. Any one who has seen a blue light burnt at sea can imagine the unearthly appearance which objects have when seen in its blue spectral flare. Simultaneously, as if it had been one man, we sent forth such a shout of welcome as made the vaults of heaven



resound with its echo. And very soon after the hail of "Lions, ahoy!" greeted us.

To descend from our exalted position, without the aid of daylight, was no easy matter. Indeed, the descent was at any time worse than the ascent, for one false step would have been instant death; but this to us, under the circumstances, was not a subject of a moment's consideration, therefore striking our tent, and taking with us all that we thought useful, and having made ourselves a guy fast to the top to steady our bodies, we began the descent. I was the last to go down, and found the line of the greatest aid.

A sailor always feels safe if he has a rope in his hand, no matter how small it may be; it was so with me, and perhaps it was this very confidence that caused me to trust too much to the line. I had got nearly half way down, just about where the cliff commenced to tumble home, when I set my foot on a projection of rock, which being suddenly detached, I came down several feet by the run; and when I recovered my hold, I found myself hanging in mid-air full fifty feet from the base. The line by which I hung suspended was but a small one, and not well calculated to sustain my weight. My best, and perhaps only chance, was to swing myself on to a ledge which lay some three fathoms from me. To do this, however, it was necessary to get a foot-hold to give myself an impetus, and get a turn of the rope round my hand to prevent it slipping.

During this time the party below became aware that something was wrong, and lit up another blue-light. The grey rock looked livid with its sickly glare, and I could see distinctly my danger. Below me were large masses of broken rock on which I must in all probability be dashed to pieces, if I fell. I was just preparing myself for a final effort to reach some place of safety, when a new danger menaced me. As I was putting my foot against the rock to give my body a lateral motion, I felt a sort of vibration in the rope, which told me that the sharp projections of the rock were cutting the line in two, and that one strand, if not two had parted above. A film came across my eyes, and all the actions of my life, long forgotten, flashed across my mind, and then I felt I was descending into an unfathomable depth, and all was blank and dark.

How long I remained in an unconscious state I cannot tell; but, when I came to myself, I was lying on a broad luxurious bed, set at the farther end of a large sleeping apartment, and near to the

window, at the other end of the room, was seated a young girl of exquisite mould and feature. She was sitting with her face bent down, and her rich hair hung in a cluster from her finely shaped head. Her face was pale and her forehead high; and as she sat motionless, with one hand placed gracefully forward, I could see that she had a beautifully rounded arm, and her skin was as clear as alabaster. I gazed for some seconds on this apparently delusive scene, for to me it was too lovely to be real; and it was not until I could see the heaving of her bosom that I could bring myself to think her a being of this world.

I tried to raise myself, but in doing so I found that my left arm was powerless; and, falling back, I asked, faintly, where I was.

The sound of my voice startled her, and rising hastily, she came to the bed-side, and holding up her finger, said, in a low voice which thrilled through my whole body: "Hush! the doctor

says you are not to speak; but, as you are now awake, I will send for him." And she left the room for a few seconds. When she returned she gave me a tumbler of cool refreshing drink.

I shall never forget the exquisite sensation which crept over me

as that beautiful girl moved noiselessly about the room, bathing my temples and adjusting my pillows. I thought she must be an angel sent specially for my comfort, and I was afraid if I moved or spoke that the vision would be rudely dispelled.

A peculiar languor overspread my whole frame; a deliciously cool feeling, as though cold water was issuing from a fountain in my heart and permeating through all my veins. And then how sweetly came the softened light through the partly closed windows, beyond which could be seen the cool, green, unbrazeous trees, whose branches were waving gently in the morning breeze; and then the gentle moaning of that breeze among their branches, and the lulling buzz of insects, with occasionally the merry voices of negroes; all had a delightful effect on my shattered nerves.

But, during all this time, I felt particularly hungry, and I wished the angel would give me something to eat; but I refrained from asking for it, for I should have been ashamed to have asked an angel for anything so grossly material, knowing, as I did, that angels subsisted entirely on love. Now, although I felt that love was a most exquisite thing; and that, having such a charming object on which I could concentrate



mine, life without it would have been a chaos, or blank ; yet the idea of roast-beef and mutton, soft tack and fresh butter, cold lamb and salad, and such like material substances, would, spite of the spiritual essence which seemed to have entered into my organisation since the angelic vision first presented itself to me—would, I say, obtrude itself into my mind. And to make a clean breast of it, I must confess that the idea of living on love appeared to me to be the most contemptible one that ever issued from the brain of a human creature ; and such was my craving for food, that I would have given every mortal thing I possessed—angelic vision and all—for a cut off a roast leg of mutton.

At last the little Scotch doctor from Plymouth entered the room, and the angelic vision took him on one side, and they whispered together. I knew that the fellow was married, and I thought it was very bad taste of him to be whispering to a young and innocent girl in that fashion, when he had got a wife and three children at home. Just at this moment a very handsome woman, about forty, entered the room ; she was rather tall and finely formed, and from the striking likeness between them was evidently the mother of the angelic vision.

The little doctor came to the bed-side, and felt my pulse.

"Pray, doctor," I began—

"All in good time, my dear sir. No questions now ; you shall know all about it when your head is better."

"My head ! Zounds, what's the matter with my head ?" I said, as I raised my hand to it, and found it tied up like a Christmas pudding. I was about to utter an exclamation, when the angel, with a roguish smile on her countenance, placed over my mouth, the smallest, softest, whitest hand that I ever saw, or wish to see.

"Not another word, my dear sir. Give him his medicine, Nancy," the doctor said, turning to a mulatto woman who was busying herself in the back ground, "and call me if he appears worse."

"But, doctor ! I'm hungry !" I cried. "I want something to eat !"

"A capital sign, my dear sir, but you must not excite yourself :" then turning to Nancy, he said, "you can give him some strong gruel, with a little sherry, and keep him as quiet as you can."

"All right, massa ; me quite mun, no answer question :" and the old wretch grinned hugely.

And now they all left the room, except Nancy, and I was alone,—yes, alone, for in my eyes Nancy Potts stood for nobody. Nancy Potts ! Fancy Nancy Potts, with a face as sallow as a guinea, instead of the angelic vision ! What a revulsion of feeling I experienced, as that beautiful girl, with a sunny smile and a parting glance, which to my mind seemed to say, "I'll come again soon," vanished from my view. But after all, I began to feel a sort of veneration for Nancy Potts, for she brought me some excellent gruel ; and so, having swallowed that and my medicine, I fell into a balmy sleep.

I dreamt that I was descending into cool caverns, and underground vaults ; and had a variety of delicious sensations : and, finally, I dreamt that I was on the top of a high mountain,

with the angelic vision by my side, and a refreshing breeze blowing in my face, and that I was in the greatest distress because we had nothing to eat. In the midst of my distress I was awoke by Nancy Potts pushing her black eyes, yellow face, and white teeth through the curtains, with—

"How you do din maa-n-ing, massa ? O, my la-ad, how pale you look ! Gee ! gee ! gee ! What a white little buckra it is ! But I brought you some breakfast, massa ; leetle coffee, and bread and butter, and toast—you like it, massa ?"

"O ! ha ! yes !" I exclaimed, opening my eyes and attempting to rise, "that's your sort, Nancy ;" but I had rather miscalculated my strength, and I found that the shortest way was to take the longest time, and not be in a hurry. However, I soon got myself in trim, and fell-to cheerily. The breakfast was ample, and I soon consumed the whole lot ; and what was more, could have managed the allowance, had it been doubled.

"Massa much better din maanin, I tink ?" said Nancy, as I finished my breakfast.

"Yes," I replied, pushing away the tray, "I think after that there cannot be much the matter with me :" but nevertheless I was as weak as an infant, for the exertion of eating threw me into so violent a perspiration, that I nearly fainted. However, I did not care much for that, for, although weak, I had no feverish symptoms.

Of course I was anxious to know where I was, and how I got there ; and above all, if the truth must be told, I wanted to know something about the beautiful girl who had been so kind to me on the previous day.

"Nancy," said I, in a persuasive tone, "would you kindly tell me how I came here ?"

"Massa munstn't bother himself with talking. Massa Wilson presently tell all about it."

"But, Nancy !" I said, finding I must come to the point at once, "who was the young lady who was here yesterday ?"

"Dat's my young mississ."

Now I could have guessed as much, and I therefore tried again, but it was no use ; everything I asked her was answered by her singing a nigger song, and talking to some inanimate object, thus—

"What's the young lady's name, Nancy ?" asked I.

No answer, but a sort of trumpet solo from Nancy, thus—

"Toot-tee—oot-tee—oot-tee—ta-a dee.—Drat de needle ! What for you go and broke yourself for ? Oh me, boog-ee—laa-lee !" takes a fresh needle, and begins to thread it.

"What's your young mistress's name ?" I asked again, but the only reply I got was—

"What shall I do wid me good old da-a-dy ? Oh me, boog-ee—laa-lee. Chee-chee. What for you tumble you self down for, you massa collar ? Sit in da corner, yam potatoe. Oh me, boog-ee—laa-lee. Boog-ee, boog-ee, boog-ee—laa-lee."

"Confound your boog-ee—laa-lee," said I ; "can't you answer my question ?"

"If massa no like do song, I no sing him."

Finding I could do nothing with her, I turned round and fell asleep ; but it was a sort of cat's-sleep—one eye open—for a light footstep aroused me, and I listened.

"How is he this morning, Nancy?" asked a soft voice.

"Good deal better, Miss, de Laad be prase! He eat all him brokefast, and den him asked such a lot ob questions; but I no answer him."

"What did he say?"

"He wanted to know who de beautiful young lady was dat tended him so sweetly."

"Hush!" cried the soft voice, "perhaps he is awake."

"No, him snore just now."

That was a flat lie. I never snored: but I confess I breathed rather harder than usual, and shut my eyes, as I felt that she was gazing on me. But the rest of the conversation being carried on in a whisper, I thought it was no use feigning sleep any longer, and so I said, in a languid tone,

"Nancy, have I been asleep?"

"Ees, massa sleep nicely, long time."

Just then the doctor came in, and, after sundry questions, he pronounced me in a fair way of recovery. I fancied I saw the angel's eyes brighten at the news, but it might have been fancy: at any rate, the idea was consolatory, and I treasured it accordingly.

But why linger over this part of my narrative? Softly! I was in love; and those who have experienced the beautiful dreams and the strange inquietude of that all-absorbing passion, can understand how the memory clings to those scenes, and how the mind wanders back to them, cherishing in the most sacred region of the heart the words and the actions of the beloved object. Phoo! what am I talking about? Love! what is love, hey? Well, it's something very funny and delightful—something that sets the blood coursing through the veins at the bare thought of the time when that sacred flame was first kindled in the bosom.

I was not long in discovering the how, the why, and the wherefore of the whole affair. It appeared that I had, thanks to the lateral motion of my body, descended almost clear of the rocks; and the first intimation those in the boat had of my disaster was hearing me plunge into the sea. I was picked up and conveyed to Old Roads Estate, it being the nearest habitation I could be conveyed to; and there, thanks to the kindness of Mrs. Semper and her daughter, I had been carefully attended through a most serious fever. I recovered slowly, in fact I think I lingered longer than was absolutely necessary. I liked the tender, soothing care which was bestowed upon me as an invalid. I was never tired of being in the society of this beautiful young creature, whose very soul seemed to well up kindly feeling and poetry of thought; and who listened with wrapped attention to my marvellous yarns, chiding me in the gentlest tones when they were too strong for even her credulous ear. It was to me a season of the deepest enjoyment, and I dreaded to break the spell.

Walking in the cool of the evening, I somehow told her of my love. How I did it, or what I said, I have no very distinct notion. What I do know is, that, after a few tears of joy, and some very delicious kisses, it was all right.

Some one who has just looked over my shoulder

says it is not fair to tell tales, and therefore I, as in duty bound, desist without further comment. But I will say, and she cannot deny it, that we have no reason to regret, in spite of my broken head and arm, my visit to Redonda, the Isle of Boobies.

T. E. SOUTHEE.



HOW I BECAME A HERO. By G. P.

PART II. THE CHANCE.

THURSDAY came, and I stood at the entrance-gate to bid my new friends welcome to Beaumont. At the first sound of my voice Lealie Barrington uttered my name; and "How kind!"—"How pleasant to be welcomed by a friend!"—Mrs. Barrington laying great stress on the last word—followed immediately. While the trunks were being taken from the carriages, Lealie said :

"Walk me round, Terese."

"This way, then," she said.

She then, as people do with the blind, walked round the green in front, describing it to him, always using the word that sounded to me so sadly :

"See, see, dear Lealie, there on the right is the gate by which we entered—a handsome-looking iron gate; there is a low wall on each side of this gate with iron railings on the top. It joins the house, see, on one side of the gate, and it is met at the other angle by a high wall—the high wall opposite to us. How pretty it looks!—a vine, a Virginia creeper, and such a climbing rose! A high wall, just like the opposite one, on our left, too. I wonder why that side is bare of trees and plants? Close to the house there is a narrow doorway, a doorway in the wall—let us go through it."

I opened the door, and she exclaimed :

"Oh, such a sight! Lealie, this is what you are supposed to know nothing about. There is a gable standing: how melancholy those exposed walls look, with their green and brown paper! The timbers in the roof are pretty, forming lines and triangles."

We walked through the large square at the back of the house, which had been made tolerably free of rubbish for the convenience of the tenants, and we stood on the open down, with the skylark singing above us and busy insect life all around. Mr. Barrington enjoyed it greatly.

"You will grow stronger here," she said, nestling closer to his side, and clasping his arm.

She looked up at him, and he looked at the fair evening sky with a face of worship. She watched him: her eyes dwelling on his face, all her strong woman's love in that smiling contemplation. It was evident that they were all things to each other. Would he have been made happier by the sight of her marvellous beauty? I thought not. He *felt* it—lived in it; had the vision of it for ever present to that mysterious interior sense which still he called *seeing*.

I walked home thoughtful. They were standing on the short sweet turf when I last looked back. He was stooping towards her now, she still looking up to him. I recollect the fondness of the face that freely poured forth its love upon his blindness, and felt that this woman had taught me much.

The week passed. My sister had spent several days with me, bringing my nephews, two frolicsome, handsome schoolboys. She and Mrs. Barrington had talked over many things. Our friendship had grown rapidly. We had shown her many of my uncle's letters, in which he had talked to our father of her mother. We had together destroyed what other eyes were not to see. Leslie Barrington was always present at these meetings, and we had learnt to love him. There was a peculiar elevation about his thoughts, and a singular tenderness in all his feelings. It was impossible not to rejoice in his wife's devotion to him, neither could we think her beauty thrown away.

It was at the close of the second week that I returned from a visit to my sister. When I reached my lodgings my landlady told me that Mr. and Mrs. Barrington had called in the afternoon to ask if I was at home, as they wished me to dine with them. She said they had looked quite disappointed on being told that I was not expected until late. Pleased with this little attention I determined to call on them early the following morning, and so went to bed.

I was waked from a sound sleep by a horrible noise—sound of loud voices and wailings and violent blows at my door. The first words that came to me with a full consciousness of their meaning were, "Fire! fire! O, sir, the blind gentleman!—fire! fire!" Afterwards, on looking back as calmly as I could through the events as they had followed each other, I could never tell how I got to the house—with whom, or by what way. But I was there, in that front between the enclosing walls, and I can see myself now standing—just come I suppose—standing where the Virginia creeper clung to the masonry, and hung its luxuriant green above my head.

I can see now, as I think of it, masses of flame and smoke issuing with a strange sound from the windows of the lower part of the house. I do not know how long it took me to be in the throng that half filled the hall. But I know that I was foremost among them, crying, "Mr. Barrington in the blue chamber to the right—a hundred pounds to the man who brings out Mr. Barrington!" Alas! the clumsy attempts to assist them

that had been made before I got to the spot had only increased their danger. The case was already desperate. The heated atmosphere forced people back—again and again I was thrust with that close mass of persons back from the house to the green in front.

Again all memory fails; but I know that I was at the back of the house, and in it. I never thought of Terese. Her husband—perhaps because I had learnt how truly he was her life, how utterly he was its all-absorbing joy—her husband was in my thoughts: it was her husband that I was going to save. I was up the staircase, the sea-breeze coming across that open land fed the flames, but sent them forward towards the front that I had left. I got into the passage, opened a red baize door, and saw Leslie standing, pale as a statue, by himself. At that moment the floor split just beyond where he stood with the sound of an explosion. I seized him. He knew me. The flames burst up—he knew that too. He was praying aloud. "Thy gift, O God!" I heard him say, his sightless eyes fixed as upon something far away. "Thy gift—Thy best, greatest, purest gift—token of immeasurable bounty—mark of immutable love—" He was speaking of Terese. I lifted him from the ground, got him on my back, and turned round—turned round to see the staircase I had come up in a cloud of smoke, striped by bright flashes of flame.

There was but one thing to be done. Death was by us, and must be fled from. Death was before us, but with speed, courage, a rapid foot, and a strong will, the resolution was scarcely formed before it was acted on, the danger was breasted—I rushed down upon my foe. It was not more than a minute's work, but the flames licked our faces, and took the skin off at each stroke; we were both of us on fire, but both safe, welcomed by hundreds of extended arms.

That square at the back of the house was full of men all looking to one point, all breathless with one fear. I saw that some great emotion swayed them. As if impelled by a common instinct they parted down the centre of the space; that dense body of living men seemed to dissolve away till, rapidly, almost a clearance was made in the immediate neighbourhood of the house. I saw this, and I heard a voice, "She was at the window a moment ago." Then I perceived that every eye was turned upward among the watchers, and that some one idea animated a busy knot of men, to give space to whose operations the crowd had receded to the open down, and fenced round the scene as with a dark wall of life.

I knew no more about Leslie Barrington: I was among those men in an instant. No one told me—words were not wanted—everything, as if by magnetism, was instantaneously comprehended. No one told me, but I knew that the only way to get Terese from the burning house was to raise supports high enough to enable a way to be made from the upstanding gable of the ruined house to the window where, time after time, she appeared. It was already impossible to reach her from below. Beneath her was a gulf of flame. The fire-escapes had only just come, and only now had the engines been got into efficient

work. They played away round the window where, enveloped in a blanket, she had last shown herself. Had the fire-escapes and ladders been three-quarters of an hour sooner, she might have been got out with comparative ease ; now, no one could approach the lower part of the house. How she still was safe was wonderful. And the only chance left was to build a bridge across the angle

to where she was, and bring her along it. Still the fire-engines played on the wall—still she appeared and disappeared. She had never spoken a word, never given a single cry for help. We all knew why,—how, to spare her husband, she had borne herself thus heroically. She lost nothing by this great forbearance. The supports rose, the bridge-way was half across. It was not



very far, yet it was a height and a way that not six men in that multitude could venture to tread with any hope of success. Suddenly flames burst forth from the ends of the house nearest to the bridge-way. It must be done quickly now. Old casements had been used by the builder at the back of the house, and through one she was now leaning, clinging to the centre mullion for support. A youth—the steadiest head and quickest hand among the workmen—had succeeded in so nearly reaching her, as to thrust before him on the plank a light ladder with a rope fastened to the end. She comprehended in an instant, broke the glass out of the casement that did not open, pulled the ladder into the open window, tied it to the

mullion ; and, thrusting herself through the opening, she stood on the window-sill, reaching forward for help. Who could walk that plank and ladder and lead her on ? Boldly, steadily, the youth moved forward. As she stepped on the ladder he faltered ; another step and it swayed ; he recovered his balance, lost it again, and fell—fell towards the house. A sudden rush was made towards him, and he was safe, but with a broken arm. Still she never uttered a sound, but I saw her clinging to the middle mullion, looking down among the crowd ; and I knew for whom she looked. In an instant another man was on that plank ; but he was too anxious—too quick : he dropt before he had gone half the way. And

now there was a pause. I was among the rafters of the ruined house, and near the place from which the bridge-way started. I knew I could not do it. The misery of my weakness! would no one else attempt it?

I looked down—I saw, believe me, reader, it is true, as truly as you see these words—I saw among the blocks of wood and litter of bricks and beams, sheltered by the same roof that sheltered me, and surrounded by a strange white shimmering light, a woman, clad in a greyish-coloured robe—it might have been her burial-dress, so it looked to me—like a statue, pale and immovable, yet with dark waving locks, in large masses, on her shoulders. But the sea-breeze never moved a hair of its long length; and, but that it was darker than Mrs. Barrington's, being nearly black, and the whole figure taller, I might have mistaken them. Now I had never believed in ghosts, I had never thought much about them; but no doubt of that form being her mother's ever crossed my mind. It was her—taller, sadder, in a strange pale light of unearthly whiteness—standing as a sculptor might make an angel stand, with her eyes fixed on the figure who was holding by the mullion, and gazing among the crowd below. I say, I never doubted that the grave had given up its dead, and that He to whom all things were possible had for some great purpose sent her there. So I spoke under this strong sense of the supernatural which kept all fear away. I said, "For the love of God, what is to be done?" And I had the answer, how I cannot tell you, for I do not remember any voice; but in another moment I was standing below. I looked toward the place where the apparition had been, and it was not there. I went on quickly, for I had to do its bidding.

The clergyman of Beachly, and other good men, had taken charge of Mr. Barrington. They were telling him what was doing, not truly, but with such omissions as made it easy for him to hope and even feel secure of his wife's safety. I stood before them.

"Mr. Barrington," I said, "you are wanted. The bridge-way to your wife is so high, and sways so much, that two men have fallen in trying to reach her. She is standing on the sill of the bed-room window opposite the drawing-room. It is the only way of getting her out."

There was no need for more. He had got up, and had said "Lead me on."

Horror was painted on every face. They brought hope on mine. We advanced to where she could see. She stretched forth her arms. I said, "She sees and welcomes you." He replied, "Thank God."

He was soon up to the gable, and stood still.

"You must remember," I said, "that the way is safe, though it does sway. It is of planks on to within ten feet of her—though a ladder reached from the plank to her. That is a difficult place. And take care when you reach her—the narrowness, the double weight."

"Keep close together!" called a man from the crowd.

Leslie Barrington waved his hand towards the voice, and stepped with a cautious foot upon the

plank. He took three or four steps very slowly, then walked on bravely, getting slower again as he reached the place of greatest vibration. What a silence reigned below. Only the rushing of the water, the cracking of timbers and hoarse whisper of the flames. Then came her voice so calm and sweet, and tenderly low.

"My husband—my darling—I am coming to you!"

She stepped on the trembling ladder, held up her hands once as she nearly lost her balance, and where the ladder and the plank met—just where poles from below made steady the ends of each—they stood together; she had gone across those bars like a bird. She stood not trusting herself to look on anything but his sightless eyes. The silence below was unbroken; women dropped upon their knees; many prayed in their hearts, as I did. To our unutterable surprise, in stooping he lifted her in his arms, and leaned her on his shoulder across his breast. He turned round and walked back to where, on a temporary sort of flooring, I stood, and gently touching his arm as I had learnt to do, I guided him to the plank, where he set her down in safety.

The gazing world below made amends for silence then. How they cheered! They woke the seagulls from their nest, and the rocks and cavernous cliffs echoed the cheer. Amidst it all I saw them into a carriage, and found that the clergyman had arranged for them to go into a house close to his own, where they could be quiet in lodgings for a time.

"Anybody else can come into our house," he said, "the carriage and horses, and men-servants are gone to the doctor's. He waits for him at 5, Cliff Terrace."

So I ran by the carriage and helped them out; saw Nugent at the door of the new residence; shook hands with Dr. Bennet; told Terese I should come in the morning, and went home to thank God, and get some refreshment as I might.

The next day, and many days following, I went to see them. In a week's time they had recovered from the effects of their danger and fright. They gave God thanks publicly, and distributed a large sum of money among those who helped them.

Terese could talk of it now. And I had often thought that I would tell her of the apparition. But so solemn was the remembrance that I could not, for some weeks, get strength enough to speak of it.

At last, just before the day fixed for my departure, when I was sitting with her alone in the drawing room of their lodgings, I began to tell her. At first she heard me, with a strange half-frightened face; but, as I went on, she looked intensely interested, now and then asking me a question in her sweet voice, and regarding me with a gentleness which had something sisterly in it.

I ceased speaking, and she answered me—an-swered with a question put with a downcast face, and the least possible smile trembling on her lips.

"Why have you never married?"

I was vexed.

I said, suddenly: "Perhaps because I have never seen a woman I could love."

"Yes, you have!" she answered quickly.

And if the spirit of mischief ever dwelt in woman, and looked out of woman's eyes, it looked out of those that now most unscrupulously sought my somewhat agitated face, "Yes, you have!" She rose, opened a door that led into another room, and said, "Ethel!"

There came forth a lady, younger, taller, darker-haired, and as beautiful as Terese.

"Ethel Barrington. Mr. Deane, my husband's sister. She is younger than I am—(don't stare at me, Ethel)—but very like—very like my beautiful mother, and your picture of her; is she not? Of course we thought you knew everything. But Ethel had come to us, the night of the fire, from Sir Frederick Worth's. She and the servants

had all time to be helped out somehow. I could not leave Leslie. He went to a room to secure papers; there you found him, and you know the rest. Ethel was fetched again the next morning by Lady Worth. It was Ethel who told you that Leslie could tread that terrible plank. She only returned to us yesterday. Do you understand it now?"

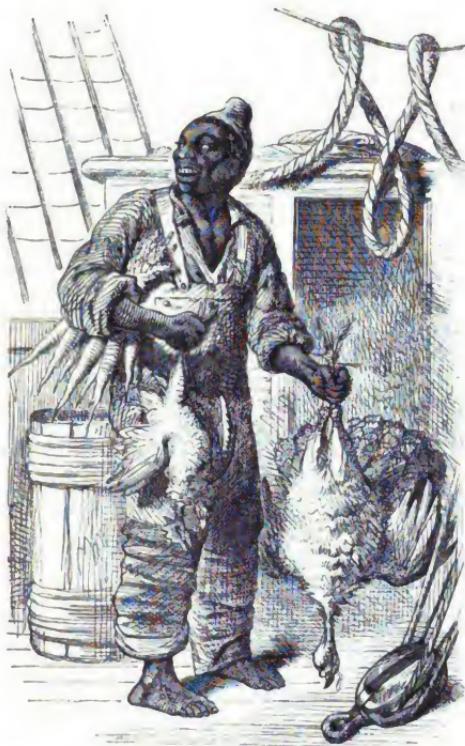
I did understand it. I understood, too, the bright exulting glance that would follow me and find me out, and tell me again and again, without the trouble of words, till I was shame-faced and cowardly, and struck with tremor and chicken-heartedness, that I had—yes, I had, and that I knew I had seen the woman I could marry, and that Ethel Barrington was she. And so I became a hero!—a hero? Do you doubt it; question it? Fair doubter, cease. I am Ethel Barrington's hero. I am hers.



MY FRIEND THE DOCTOR.

Y friend the doctor is a negro by birth, Englishman by education, and nautical—strictly nautical—by inclination. Leave him ashore for more than a month at a spell, and the doctor would run to seed like an overgrown cucumber, or wither like a caterpillar-blighted cabbage. Only let him skim up the side of a vessel again, be she large or small, steamer or sailor, and he revives immediately. Climate or exposure have no influence upon his iron constitution, and he lives always under the happy conviction that without his valuable services the captain and crew and passengers, to any amount, must inevitably perish. Yet my friend the doctor possesses no diploma—no licence to practise medicine or surgery; no knowledge of physic or drugs (thanks to his good constitution), excepting that Epsom salts are exceedingly abominable of flavour, and apt in the course of an hour or two to produce spasmodic cramps where the doctor would sooner stow away a pint or so of pea-soup. And my friend the doctor is—the ship's cook!

The origin of this appellation it is hard to discover, nor do I presume that by a perusal of James's "Naval History" any one would be a bit the wiser: perhaps it is because he is a general benefactor. In India they call the sea-breeze the doctor, and gasp and look out for its approach with all the anxiety that a suffering patient evinces for the arrival of some skilful physician. The cook has been the doctor with sailors beyond even the memory of that gifted individual, the oldest nautical inhabitant, and doctor he will remain so long as England has a plank



to float upon the waters, and a flag to brave the battle and the breeze.

My friend the doctor is one of a very extensive class or genus; but to study him to perfection we must see him established on board of some small collier brig, or little trading schooner, whose voyages seldom extend further than the Mediterranean or the Brazils. It is here where his genius and skill are put to the utmost stretch, the culinary means at his command being limited to salt beef to-day, salt pork to-morrow; pease-pudding, pea-soup, lobscouse, and, at dreary intervals, a sea pie. Now and then a hapless shark or a shoal of bonnettas afford him an opportunity of rivalling a Soyer in his dishes, and the liver of a porpoise causes him to be elevated as high as the "sweet little cherub that sits up aloft" in the estimation of captain, mates, and crew—so dainty and savoury to the poor hungry sailors is the mess he produces. The doctor's mainstay at sea is the dark, dampish pantry, or store-room, a box about ten feet square beneath the

cabin or cuddy, and to dive into which gloomy recess he has to furnish himself with a glimmering horn lantern, and remove a hatch just under the cabin dining-table. Herein, in casks, in boxes, in bags, piled up and screwed together as only sailors can stow them, are invaluable treasures, items without which the doctor would feel like a stranded camel in an African desert. Butter and onions, currants and raisins, treacle and sugar; potatoes, flour, spice, split peas, and, curiously intermingled with them, paint kegs, tallow candles, blocks, odds and ends of ropes, a slush bucket, herrings, and a bale of salt fish. This region is sacred to the doctor and the second mate. The latter descends once a week to serve out the crew's weekly allowance of groceries—the doctor daily, in search of indispensable culinary articles. And what with the horrible stench and the legions of rats scampering in all directions, his visits are usually as brief as he can possibly contrive to make them. The doctor's only assistant is "Jimmy Ducks," the hapless

orphan cabin-boy, who is so perpetually occupied with one thing or another, from lighting the caboose fire at four o'clock in the morning to washing out the skipper's socks at eleven P.M., that he can only find time to lave himself once a week (when the doctor kindly assists in scouring him), and generally makes the caboose his dormitory for the few hours mercifully allowed him to rest his weary and oftentimes very sore limbs.

My friend the doctor, when he finds himself fairly afloat and out of sight of land, settles down comfortably into every-day life; his sleeping apartment is the best bunk in the "fo'castle," and close under the hatchway, so as to permit of his enjoying respiration freely. The floor of the fo'castle constitutes his drawing-room, and his large deal box answers for a settee or sofa, or anything that a fertile imagination may convert it into, upon which, of a stormy or rainy night, he will loll, with a very short, very black pipe in his mouth, and spin yarns to the watch below; till some sudden gust or danger, and the summons of all hands on deck, leaves him to the rats and cockroaches, and solitary cogitations (the doctor being exempted from sailors' duty, especially at night), which opportunity he skilfully improves by unlocking and diving into the mysterious recesses of his chest, producing a dark-looking, well-protected phial, which evidently contains something that comforts him in solitude and danger, and must possess all the virtues of the widow's cruise of oil, that, despite often applications, was perpetually full. By the way, amongst other treasures under the doctor's charge, are the spirits and bottled-beer on board, besides sundry pickles and sauces, and hermetically sealed meats and vegetables, all which are jealously detained under lock and key in the side-lockers of the captain's state-room (a miserable bandbox, six feet by two), and only brought to light on very remarkable and state occasions.

To investigate the contents of the doctor's chest would prove an afternoon's entertainment to every soul on board; for, of a truth, they are varied. From the gay gilt-buttoned tail-coat, down to the pomatum-pot and the really useful housewife, everything has been bought and carefully packed by the doctor's absent wife, who enjoys the privilege of drawing his half-pay and rents a second pair back in the salubrious neighbourhood of Ratcliffe. The doctor consequently looks upon the disturbing of this chest as little short of sacrilege. Every soul on board, from the captain to the cabin-boy, entertains a secret veneration for the doctor's "missus," who has been represented by the doting husband as a paragon of virtue and a "scholar" to boot, and who happens to be, at the very time these encomiums are uttered some thousand miles away at sea, enjoying herself prodigiously with the "double shuffle" at the "Jolly Sailor," and imbibing such liquid comfort as that establishment can provide. But the doctor is happily innocent of disparaging impressions, and though under a dusky husk, his affectionate heart paints his Susan's portrait as the climax of virtue and goodness.

My friend the doctor's reception-room, audience-hall, dining and sitting-room, are all concen-

trated in the caboose, which, in stormy weather, is not unfrequently exposed to the risk of being pitched overboard, doctor and all. In it he can never stand upright; in it he can only sit with his knees up to his eyebrows; in it, however, with the door closed to windward, he manages, with the help of a good fire, an iron saucepan, a kettle, and an oven, to prove a perfect magician. If there is one thing more than another in which he excels, it is the manufacturing of that, by sailors, dearly-loved dish—"duff" or "dough"—without which British tars would go to rack and ruin, and which, being usually as solid and heavy as a leaden bullet, might give a rhinoceros an indigestion, but is satisfying and a mere trifle to the English sailor. Here, in this caboose, the doctor receives deputations, who, pannakin in hand, suggest that a little hot water would greatly facilitate the weekly operation of eradicating bristles, constitutionally of a wild boarish nature. Here, when the watch below are indulging in a forenoon siesta, and the watch on deck are up aloft scraping and tarring, and pitching and painting, the doctor receives in state the bare-armed, straw-hatted second mate, who possesses an appetite awful even for a sailor; and despite the heat of the weather and the fury of the furnace—despite the fact that the perspiration pours down both their faces in torrents, they get up an extemporaneous lunch of thin-sliced pork fried with onions, assisted by hard ship-biscuit, and washed down with rum-and-water that would stupefy any other mortals upon the face of the earth, excepting those who are undergoing the fierce ordeal of a hot sun and a hotter furnace, with much manual labour to boot. Here also, with condescension, the doctor receives the humble appeals of the wretched cabin-boy, whose face and arms are covered with slush and soot, and who, having been suddenly summoned from scraping and greasing the fore-top gallant mast—a pleasant little occupation which the mate has allotted them, because he neglected to "give them fowls their meat in proper time this morning"—has been summarily cuffed and buffeted by the skipper for daring to present himself in his august state-room without being *au grand parfait* as regards toilet.

Even for him the good old doctor has balmy words and a lump of cold duff with treacle; and having been initiated in the science before, strongly recommends the ill-used cabin-boy to return to the innocent and useful calling of clay-pipe making so soon as his poor feet touch British soil again. Hence also, at stated periods, this great purveyor to the necessities and comforts of the floating community issues the daily rations of coffee, tea, meat, potatoes, pease-pudding, duff, &c.; and, seated upon the ledge of the caboose-door, with a knife-board across his knees to answer for a table, the doctor condescendingly partakes of every meal, mingling freely in the conversation and jest of his brother sailors who are squatted on the deck all around, receiving their encomiums, and like them, ever and anon cracking a biscuit with his elbow, which has defied every other applicable force.

The doctor's life on board is rather a monotonous one. His costume is occasionally varied by

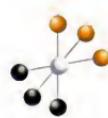
the state of the weather, and includes a rough tarpaulin coat, in which he invests himself on very rainy or cold wintry days. Otherwise the Guernsey frock, red flannel nightcap, and dubious trousers—originally brown canvas, but now a composition of tar, smoke, and soot—constitute his daily habiliments. Having no watch to keep at night, he is an early riser; and a huge bucket of salt water, soap, and a scrubbing brush make his polished skin shine like ebony. Breakfast is no important tax upon his abilities, except perhaps as regards the cabin, and here it is sometimes a perplexing mental question as to whether salt pork or salt beef fried with a liberal supply of onions, and perhaps seasoned with a little curry powder, would prove most savoury for the cabin gourmands.

After breakfast the serious duties of the doctor commence. He has then to visit the harness cask (as the salt provision casks are called, and by the way rather suspiciously savouring, as *harness* does, of salt horse), and pick and choose suitable joints for the cabin and fo'castle. The soaking of this meat, the peeling of potatoes and onions, preparation of duff or pease-pudding, occasional lending a hand to "haul upon the bowline, the maintop bowline,"—sabbath executions of poultry or pork, interspersed with some score or two of pipes during the forenoon, and friendly admonitions to the poor cabin-boy as he washes up the plates and dishes—these constitute the every-day life of my excellent friend the doctor when at sea. The exceptions are high days and holidays, when potted meat and bottled fruit are brought into play, and when all the energy and skill of the doctor are taxed in the construction of savoury meat pies, pudding, and pastry. The afternoon and evening, weather permitting, he usually devotes to literature and anecdote, and great is the enthusiasm with which the other sailors receive his often-repeated story of how in such and such a year, at some small town in the West Indies—Cook being then a mere hop o' my thumb—he and a lot of others contrived to entice and entrap a whole battalion of turkeys and a fleet of geese by means of skilfully baited fish-hooks; and so, putting manfully to sea, dragged these unwilling victims over the waves and into the ship's caboose, much to the astonishment and terror of the natives, who conceived their poultry labouring under the same influence as the wretched swine of the Gergesenes.

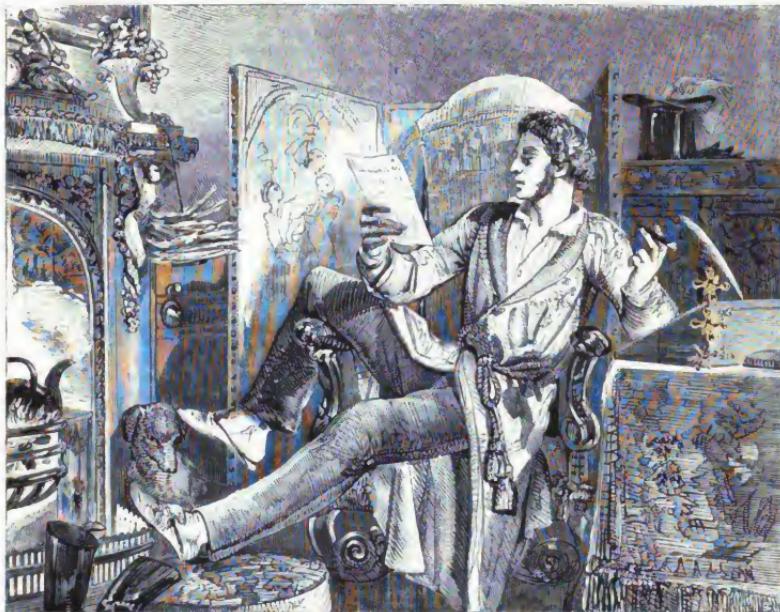
But to see my friend the doctor in the height of his glory and enthusiasm, you must behold him freshly arrived, after a lengthened sea-voyage, at some foreign port, with a score or two of bum-boats flying round the vessel. Who dares interfere with his behests then? From the captain downwards everybody confides in his skill and taste, both as regards bargaining and as to the articles of consumption to be purchased. With his ivory teeth gleaming satisfaction out of their ebony frame, my friend the doctor struts the deck barefooted, and still crowned with the greasy red night-cap, an object of veneration to the butchers, the bakers, the poulters, the dealers in fruit and vegetables, &c., that are plying alongside. Strictly he scrutinises each article—positive is the price he

fixes. Gradually the caboose assumes the appearance of a green-grocer's, with a poulticer's and a butcher's hard by; whilst the long-boat has been converted into a fruit-shop. The skipper and half the crew have gone ashore, the mates and the remainder are busy investigating baskets of oranges, bananas, lemons, &c. By some winked-at contrivance, "strong waters" have been smuggled on board, and whilst speculating upon the astounding results that his caboose will produce about dinner-time—the soup and the boiled fish, and the baked mutton, puddings, pies, tarts, &c.—my friend the doctor squats down like a black thrush amidst a profusion of foliage; and labouring under the influence of heat, the black cutty-pipe, and perhaps something else, nods complacently to the gentle rise and fall of the anchored schooner, until savoury odours recall him once more to a sense of the arduous duties that a nautical doctor has to perform.

F. A. N.



HOW AN ADVERTISEMENT GOT A WIFE.



"Tobacco is the tomb of love," writes a modern novelist of high standing; but, with every respect for his authority, I beg to say it was quite the contrary in my case.

Twenty-one years ago, I was sitting by my fireside, totting up innumerable pages of my bachelor's housekeeping-book, taking exercise in arithmetic on long columns of "petty cash"—comprising items for carrots and Bath-bricks, metal tacks and mutton chops—until, tired and wearied, I arrived at the sum total, and jerked the book on the mantelpiece. Nearly at the same time I placed my hand in the pocket of my dressing-gown, drew out a leather case, and lit a principe. Well, having lit the principe, I placed my feet on the fender and sighed, exhausted by my long job of domestic accounts. I was then in business—'twas a small wholesale business then, 'tis a large one now—yet one morning's totting of carrots and Bath-bricks, of metal tacks and mutton chops, would tire me a thousand times more than twenty-four hours of honest ledger-work. I sighed, not from love, but from labour; for, to tell you the truth, I had never been in love. In this to go on for ever? thought I, as I took my third whiff, and looked dreamily through the thin smoke as it ascended between me and a large print of the capture of Gibraltar which hung over the chimney-piece. Am I to spend my prime in totting up parsnips, and computing carrots, and comptrolling

washing-bills? I sighed again, and in the act, off flew the button of my neck-band, as though some superior power had seasonably sent the accident to remind me of my helplessness.

The button settled the business; though, as it slipped down inside my shirt, and passed with its mother-o'-pearl coldness over my heart, it for a moment threatened to chill my matrimonial resolution. I pitied my own lonely state, and pity, we know, is akin to love. But how was the matter to be accomplished? Most men at my age would already have adjusted their inclination to some object; so that having made up their mind and counted the cost, little more would have remained to be done than to decide upon the day, and lay hold upon the licence. This, however, was not the case with me. I had been too much occupied, too idle, or too indolent to devote the time or make the effort to "form an attachment." It was through no disinclination or difficulty to be pleased; for had any young lady of moderately agreeable powers taken the trouble, she might have married me long ere then. I should even have been grateful to her for taking the trouble off my hands; but I was too bashful to adopt the initiative.

I was a bashful man. This weakness came from the same cause as my Uncle Toby's—namely, a want of acquaintance with female society, which want arose from another cause in my case—namely, too close an application to business.

Accordingly I thought of an advertisement; yet with no practical design of doing business, but, as I persuaded myself, for a joke. So I scratched with a pencil on the back of a letter, the following :-

WANTED A WIFE.—None but principals need apply. The advertiser does not require cash, but only a companion. He is six-and-twenty, and, tired of single, he thinks he can settle down to married life. As men go, he believes he has a moderate share of temper, and want of time is his only reason for having recourse to the newspapers. He has enough means for himself and a second party, and is willing to treat at once. He is quite aware that a great many attempts to convert his honest intentions into an extravagant joke will be made, but he warns all rash intruders. If he finds a man hardy enough to make sport of his affections, he will thrash him—if a woman, he will forgive her. He has a heart for the sincere, a horsewhip for the impertinent. In either case, all applications will be promptly attended to, if addressed to P. P., to the office of this paper.

I felt proud of my composition, and puffed away my principle with a vague glee and anticipation of something coming out of it. I had no very great idea that anything but fun would result; and I certainly had not the slightest notion of involving myself in a personal collision with any one. Still the presentiment that it was not destined to be all a barren joke, pressed upon me. On Saturday the advertisement appeared, and I heard its style canvassed by all my friends, and it was jokingly suggested by more than one, that I was the domestically destitute individual who put it forth.

On Monday morning I sent a boy to the news-paper office for P. P.'s letters. I expected he might be followed by some curious and inquisitive persons; so I told him on his way back to call at a bachelor neighbour's of mine for a book. The trick told. The lad was followed by some persons who never lost sight of him until they ran him to my friend's, and then they went back and announced that he was the advertiser. I thus discharged in full one or two practical jokes which my neighbour had played upon me. The answers were of the usual character—several seeking to elicit my name, and still more suggesting places of meeting, where I was to exhibit myself with a flower in my button-hole and a white handkerchief in my hand. One only looked like business. It was from a lady, who proposed an interview in a neighbouring city, about forty miles north. She said there was something so frank and straightforward in my advertisement, that she was convinced it was real, and she could rely upon my keeping her name secret, if after we met nothing came of the meeting. She would, therefore, see me at the —, at —, on a certain day, and if mutual approbation did not follow the interview, why there was no harm done.

Most people would have put down this as a trap to give me a journey for nothing. I did not. A presentiment impelled me to accept and keep the engagement.

This was in the old coaching days, when a man had time to make an acquaintance in forty miles, not as now, when you are at your journey's end before you have looked round your company in a

railway carriage. There were but two insides—myself and a pleasant, talkative, honest-faced elderly gentleman. Shy and timid in female society, I was yet esteemed animated and agreeable enough amongst my own sex. We had no trouble, therefore, in making ourselves agreeable to one another; so much so, that as the coach approached G—, and the old gentleman learned that I meant to stop there that night, he asked me to waive ceremony and have a cup of tea with him after I had dined at my hotel. My "fair engagement" was not till next day, and, as I liked the old gentleman, I accepted his offer.

After my pint of sherry, I brushed my hair and went in search of my coach companion and my promised cup of tea. I had no difficulty in finding him out, for he was a man of substance and some importance in the place. I was shown into the drawing-room. My old friend received me heartily, and introduced me to his wife and five daughters. "All spinsters, sir," said he; "young ladies whom an undiscriminating world seems disposed to leave upon my hands."

"If we don't sell, papa," said the eldest, who with her sisters seemed to reflect her father's fun, "it is not for want of puffing, for all your introductions are advertisements."

At the mention of this last word, I felt a little discomposed, and almost regretted my engagement for the next day, when that very night, perhaps, my providential opportunity had arrived.

I need not trouble my readers with all our sayings and doings during tea; suffice it to say that I found them a very pleasant, friendly family, and was surprised to find I forgot all my shyness and timidity, encouraged by their good-tempered ease and conversation. They did not inquire whether I was married or single, for where there were five young unmarried daughters, the question might seem invidious. I, however, in the freedom of the moment, volunteered the information of my bachelorthood; I thought I had no sooner communicated the fact than the girls passed round a glance of arch intelligence from one to the other. I cannot tell you how odd I felt at the moment. My sensations were between pleasure and confusion, as a suspicion crossed my mind, and helped, I felt, to colour my cheek. Presently, however, the eldest, with an assumed indifference which cost her an effort, asked where I was staying.

"At the — hotel," I answered with some embarrassment.

It was with difficulty they restrained a laugh; they bit their lips, and I had no longer a suspicion—I was certain. So, after having some music, when I rose to depart I mustered courage, as I bid them good bye, to say aside to the eldest:

"Shall P. P. consider this *the interview?*"

A blush of conscious guilt, I should rather say innocence, told me I had sent my random arrow to the right quarter; so I pressed the matter no further at that moment, but I did her hand.

I remained in at my hotel next day, until an hour after the appointed time, but no one made their appearance. "Then," thought I, brushing my hair and adjusting my cravat, "since the mountain will not come to Mahomet, Mahomet must go to the mountain;" so I walked across to my old

friends. The young ladies were all in. The eldest was engaged with some embroidery at the window. I had therefore an opportunity, as I leant over the frame, to whisper :

"S. S. is not punctual."

The crimson in her face and neck was now so deep, that a sceptic himself would no longer doubt. I need say no more ; that evening in her father's garden, she confessed that she and her sisters had conspired to bring me up to G—— on a fool's errand, never meaning, of course, to keep the engagement.

"Then," said I, "since you designed to take me in, you must consent to make me happy !"

"And what did she say, papa ?" asks my second daughter, who is now looking over my shoulder as I write.

"Why, you little goose, she promised to be your mamma, and she has kept her word."

M. R. J.



AN INCIDENT OF DARTMOOR.

The parish of Lydford in Devonshire, is said to be the largest parish in England : its extent ought to be measured in square miles instead of acres, for nearly the whole of the great Forest of Dartmoor is included within its boundaries.

Dartmoor is no longer, if it ever were, a forest, in the ordinary meaning of the term, for there is scarcely a tree upon it ; but it is a splendid waste, where a man may walk twenty miles on end, and see nothing but granite rocks, and heather, and mountain-streams, and bogs, save where from some hill-side the bare stone walls of some moorland farm, the dark, sharp outlines of which lie stretched like a map before him on the other side of the valley, or a group of white-washed houses near a bridge, give some signs of human habitation. The pale green fields and patches of turnips look ten times more desolate, struggling as they are for existence with swamp and rock, than the primeval moor beyond, which partakes of a certain grandeur clothed in nature's own rich colours.

But if Dartmoor is wild now, a hundred and thirty years ago it was wilder, and in that enormous parish some difficulty occurred in reaching the parish church. In the present day there is an orthodox church at Princetown (the convict establishment), and dissenting chapels have arisen in lonely places ; and these places of worship have graveyards in which the moor-men can bury their dead; but a hundred and thirty years ago every funeral had to go to Lydford church, ten, fifteen, twenty miles over hill and valley, rock and mire. The curious old "Leech-path" by which they took their weary journey is still in existence, and may be seen winding its melancholy way through the wildest morasses on the moor. Bog on every side, you can turn neither to the right nor left, but on the Leech-path there is firm footing. This was the Churchwalk of the old moor-men before roads were known, and along it, on the shoulders of their neighbours, or the back of mountain pony, were the ancestors of the present race borne to their last home in Lydford churchyard.

In the early part of the last century one Syddall of Exeter was called on important business to Tavistock. The distance by road was sixty miles at least, but not more than thirty across the moor ; Syddall was a bold man, and moreover pressed for time, so he determined to ride across the moor. It was winter, and snow had fallen, and still lay



thinly on the ground in the cultivated country, but our traveller was not prepared for the quantity he found when he arrived at the borders of the moor. However, he was not dismayed ; the track lay well defined before him, for it had been already trodden since the snow fell ; so, calculating upon crossing the moor before dark set in, he rode on. But his difficulties began to increase with the wildness of the country, what with the roughness of the path and the snow, he found he could go at little better than a walking pace, and the afternoon of a January day found him about the centre of Dartmoor, with nothing but snow on every side, a leaden

sky above him, black and threatening towards the south-east, and a chill wind blowing, that froze his very blood. Presently, even while he was deliberating about proceeding, the snow began to fall thickly, and to drift furiously across his path. He foresaw that the track behind him would become obliterated, and that there was nothing for it but to push on to where some granite walls, looking black against the snow, in the valley beneath him, proclaimed the vicinity of a farm-house ; with some little difficulty he traced his way to the house before dark, and there found shelter.

The inmates consisted of three young farmers,



their sister, and two labourers ; our traveller was introduced to a decent bed-room in which a great turf-fire was blazing, and you may be sure he congratulated himself inwardly with fervid thankfulness upon having fallen upon such hospitable quarters, instead of perishing in the snow as many a man had done in those wild parts. He found his host and hostess civil and obliging people, and after sharing their supper with them at the kitchen table, was not sorry to get to bed.

Having arrived in his own room, however, he found it so warm and comfortable that he began to undress in a very leisurely manner, and at the

same time to glance curiously at the room and its furniture ; the latter was simple enough—an enormous oak-chest, and old cabinet of drawers, and two dilapidated chairs. Syddall began lazily to speculate about these things—where they came from ? how they came there ? how old they were ? The great box especially puzzled him ; he could not divine its use, but with some vague idea that it held the family-linen, he dismissed it from his mind, as he thought, for ever.

Whether it was the cider he drank at supper, or what, I know not ; but certain it was that Syddall could not sleep ; he was restless and feverish, and if he did snatch a doze he suddenly jumped up again with some vague haunting idea on his mind he could not shake off even for the first few minutes of wakefulness. Finding sleep did not suit him he determined to lie awake ; by-and-by the flickering of the fire-light upon the old furniture recalled his attention to that—that box ! What on earth could be in it ? Then he recalled stories of travellers murdered in lonely places on nights like this, and stowed away in chests, till his hair stood on end. Then dismissing these foolish fancies from his mind, he bent his thoughts resolutely on his sweetheart, but in vain ! That box haunted him, and opened it must be, "just to relieve his mind." Getting up cautiously, therefore, he proceeded to light his candle and approach the chest ; he found it fastened only by an ordinary clasp ; he lifted the heavy lid quietly, and what sight met his eyes ?

*

Horror ! The dead body of a man ! Whether Syddall's blood curdled in his veins or not, I am unable to say ; but as this phenomenon almost invariably occurs on like occasions, I should think it must then. However that may be, there is no doubt that Syddall was in a tremendous fright, the immediate prospect of being murdered is calculated to appal any man ; after a minute of stupefaction, being, as I have said, a bold man, he began to act, and having ascertained by a glance that there was no egress by the window, he rushed to the door, but alas ! there was only a common latch ! So placing the two chairs and the fender against it, he sat down upon the end of the bed, and gave himself up for lost. That being the case, he forthwith began deliberately to dress himself, and prepared to meet his doom, determined with the assistance of the poker (fool, and driveling idiot ! had he not left his pistols below with the saddle), to sell his life as dearly as possible.

The house, however, continued noiseless—not a mouse stirred, but there sat Syddall till morning broke, and a weary, fearful watch he had of it. When it was light enough he looked out of window, and surveyed the dreary prospect, now one mass of snow, white and unbroken in all directions. Presently, he saw all the men (looking, it must be confessed, strangely unlike murderers) leave the premises, and overheard them say that they were going to look for lost cattle on the moors, and might not be back till nightfall.

Now was Syddall's time ! He let them get to a safe distance and then summoned the girl. Putting his back against the door to prevent escape, he at once told her that he knew her crime, that denial and dissimulation were vain, and he besought her to endeavour to escape the fate that must follow such a deed by a full confession.

"What is it then ? what do y' mean ?"

Syddall was not the man to be balked or turned aside from his purpose by feigned innocence. He pointed to the box, and was about to speak, when a light seemed to break upon the maiden, and a smile hovered on her mouth. She replied, however, with perfect gravity :

"Tis naught but Vather salted in," she said ; "'a died last week, and us couldn't car' un to Lydvur in the snaw, so us salted 'un in."

JOHN F. COLLIER.



SAVERNAKE AND FORTY-FIVE.



when they had ceased to wish to speak well of him, and yet were obliged to speak civilly to him, as would sometimes happen to gentlemen who incurred money obligations which they are unable to meet. He could laugh, and show good white teeth, but his usual smile was a muscular effort which drew his mouth a little way towards his left ear, and did not produce a pleasing effect, especially upon a party who was endeavouring to show excellent reasons why Mr. Savername should forego proceedings on a certain bill, and got that smile instead of a promise to give time.

But he was not altogether a bad fellow—who is, in these days? Savername would give a very good dinner, and so far from stinting his excellent wine, nothing delighted him more than to see a guest take a great deal too much. Cheaply purchased by the usurer was the pleasure of being able to say to his guest next time they met, and especially if other persons were present, “How very drunk you were on Tuesday. What a ridiculous figure you cut up-stairs. Laughing-stock of the whole party. O, don’t tell me.” Well, the dinner he would give you would have cost you at an hotel a guinea and a half at least. Put your own price upon the pleasure his elegant speech next day would cause you, and deduct the difference. That, at least, was the arithmetic of a good many men who had their own reasons for not rejecting his invitations, and who, during that period, declared that they got the dinner cheap. Now, out of his clutch, they say that they were very extravagant.

It has been said that John Savername took pains to impress upon the world the fact that he was a good man. Not a religious man, mind; for he was too self-indulgent to indulge in playing at Somebody Else. He also lacked self-command for the continuous assumption of character. He usually swore a little, and sometimes a great deal, and certainly had not the educative imagination which enables some professedly pious persons to

ORLDLINGS (I am informed) say that if you keep on telling the world a certain thing, the world will believe it at last, and the great art (I am assured) is, never to lose an opportunity of pressing your point upon your intended convert. The world said that Mr. John Savername was a good man, and I am inclined to think that he obtained this character chiefly from his having pertinaciously, and for several years, declared that he deserved it.

Now, Mr. Savername did not look like a good man. Nevertheless, he was not ill looking, had a fresh and clean complexion, shaved all kind of hair from his face, kept his upper hair, which was black and rather short, smoothly oiled, and though as a professional gentleman (who “did” bills) he did not think it meet to dress exactly like those who came to him for money, he was always very glossy and Sunday-fied, and his things looked new. He had rather small sharp black eyes, which did not “stand out with fatness,” like the evil Oriental’s, but rather the reverse, the plumpness of his face placing them a little in recess, as in the porcine family. His voice was harsh and coarse, and not particularly under his command, especially when his temper had mastered him, but as a rule, he affected, with his equals, a kind of jeering jollity which those who wished to speak well of him called *bonhomie*. They did not call it so

utter in their wrath the most offensive things without ever becoming profane. And there were two or three other reasons why Mr. Savername’s goodness could not exactly take the form of religion. But what he asserted to the world that he was, and what when he had had some wine, I am disposed to think he half believed himself to be, was a kindly-hearted, charitable, generous Chap (as he put it), a little impulsive, and perhaps too apt to speak his mind (“might perhaps have been a richer man if I *wasn’t*”), but at bottom a worthy fellow, whose Heart was in the Right Place. O, what a lot of *that* description there are, and what an addition they are to the necessary miseries of this life!

Our friend was very prompt at putting his name down to charities and the like, and his name was often proclaimed by the Worthy Chairman, and inserted in the printed list of Benefactors. He was something less prompt in handing his cheque to the collector, who was lucky if he found Mr. Savername disengaged, but one has heard of that little peculiarity being exhibited by better men even than John Savername. John sometimes waxed savage, and took high ground, when teased for his contribution. “I give my example, and my name, and my recommendation to your association. I take an interest in it, and get others to do so, and I think that it is ungrateful and impolitic to bother me about the trumpery

subscription. I shall pay when I choose." And he could thus get another long grace, or perhaps escape paying altogether, until a new collector arose, who knew not Savernake.

But some people judge a man by what he is at home, and assert that until you have seen the state of feeling between him and his family, you know nothing about him. This is, of course, extremely unfair and improper. What right has anybody to penetrate into domestic life, and thence inhospiably gather information to be used elsewhere. Besides, the rule of judging from these internal discoveries is very unjustly applied. One has heard many a man excused for being a brute to, and a swindler of, persons out of doors, by the plea, "Ah, but if you only saw him at home. He is devotedly attached to Mrs. Brum-Hawk, and as for his children, they make a perfect fool of him. He can't be bad." But (and it was unlucky for Savernake), few people take the other side, and apologise for a man's insulting his wife and snubbing his children, on the ground that he does so much good out of doors and has his name on so many charity lists. He is called a hypocrite. Savernake was sometimes called a hypocrite, but chiefly by incautious wives, who did not know the value of money, or that of keeping well with a man to whom their husbands owed money. There came unhappiness once or twice out of the way in which Savernake treated his family.

He had a wife—a blessing which, like the rain, comes upon the just and the unjust, proof of its providential origin—a son who was learning the law, with a view to combining it with his father's amiable calling—and a daughter, who was a pretty girl, and as good as she could be in a house where there was little of good thought or acted. Savernake was habitually rather civil to his wife; for, as hath been told, he was a self-indulgent person, and had an instinctive sense that a good deal of extra comfort might be got out of his home with its mistress tolerably well inclined towards him. Really, therefore, Mrs. Savernake was not very much ill-treated. But as there was no real restraint upon her husband's temper, except the pleasant one that has been mentioned, and as he was pretty sure to blaze out into savagery when he got tipsy, and as he was pretty sure to get tipsy when he had company, such part of that company as had heard Mr. John Savernake administering marital chiding to Mrs. John Savernake, came away with the impression that he was a most abominable brute. Before a wife refuses to visit any of her husband's acquaintances, she should be quite sure that she can afford to have that acquaintance offended. Little Mrs. George Chalmers was very wretched when her George was captured at breakfast one morning, at the suit of John Savernake—the rupture between plaintiff and defendant was occasioned by Mrs. George's having, in consequence of her recollection of Mr. Savernake's amiabilities to his wife, refused an invitation to meet some rather distinguished victims for whom the usurer wished to make a pleasant party. However, George ought to have told her of his danger, and so she said, with tears, when she went over to see him in B 14, Surrey, bringing him the produce of her pawned jewels.

As for the son, Andrew, there was little to say about him at the time of our story, except that he was a white-faced, sneaking kind of lad, who always looked as if he thought you were going to throw something at him, and was prepared to dodge the missile. When his father swore at him, he sulked, and sometimes snapped, and even ventured on a little bad language in return. For the rest, he was a dutiful lad, and would sit on a swell's doorstep half the night, to be ready to serve him with a writ when he came home joyous and vinous from the club. He limped slightly from a preternatural kick once received by him from the foot of an Irish gentleman, not then accustomed to the amenities of the law; and who, finding the white-faced youth loitering about the door of his chambers, did, as he remarked, "eliminate the ruffian with some promptitude." Still less is there anything to say about Mr. Andrew Savernake now, inasmuch as he has not nearly half completed a mission on which he has been despatched, at his country's cost, to a distant, and what is playfully called, a penal settlement.

But Flora Savernake was a pretty and good girl, who having good impulses was very naturally led to separate herself as early as she conveniently could from a house where either hollowness or violence was the order of every day. At the time we are going to speak of she was—but stay. I should like to tell how she managed it. I am afraid she had been reading some French farce, for there was very little attention paid to her studies. Her mother knew nothing, and her father cared nothing about such matters. But Mr. Savernake found out that she had given very serious encouragement to the attentions of one Charles Heneage, a young newspaper man, who had been invited to the house because he could tell a story and sing a song, and who accepted the invitation to the house, because he liked a good dinner and Flora Savernake. Terrible was the storm that burst upon Miss Flora's curls, and thunderous were the maledictions which the man whose Heart was in the Right Place discharged upon the pretensions of "the beggar that wrote for so much a line, and hadn't a something shilling in the world."

Flora was not frightened at the noise and the oaths—she had heard that sort of thing often before. But when her affectionate father proceeded to say that he would lock her up in a bedroom until next day, when he would take her away into Wales, she began to think that matters were growing serious. I suppose she had strange ideas of the terror of Wales, and supposed that she should be shut up for life in a strong castle and fed on leeks, which was not an inviting prospect to a young lady of nineteen. So she very properly burst into tears, declared that she had never had the least idea of encouraging Mr. Heneage, except as an amusing companion; and if the next time Charles Heneage came, her papa would only be present, he would see that there was no intention, on her part, of offering him hope. To this Mr. Savernake grimly assented, but insisted that he should be concealed during the interview. He would listen to what passed.

Handsome Heneage came and Mr. Savernake was informed of his arrival, and secreted himself

as appointed. The young couple met, and by a curious coincidence (I am told that a look or a finger will put a lover on his guard) the conversation was extremely guarded and general, until after a pause, the listening father heard his daughter exclaim in a tone of high indignation :

"A letter, Mr. Heneage, and clandestinely delivered to me! No, sir, I shall not take it. Anything that I ought to receive, should be sent through my papa or mamma. Take it back, sir. You will not take it. Then I throw it on the ground, and set my foot upon it."

And Savernake heard a stamp of the little foot. Flora did not know, you see, whether he could see her, or not.

"You had better take up your letter, and go, Mr. Heneage," proceeded the artless girl. "You do not know the pain you have given me."

Mr. Heneage remarked something about sorrow and presumption, took up his letter, and departed; and Miss Savernake received some grumbling approbation from her father, and was, at all events, to be left at liberty for the present.

While he was shaving, which he was very careful about, the next morning, a sudden thought crossed Mr. Savernake's mind, and he cut himself, as the reader may be glad to hear, very severely. It took him some time to abuse his wife, and staunch the blood, and finish dressing; but as soon as those duties were performed, he rushed to Miss



Flora's door, and demanded whether she were dressed. No answer.

Dressed, of course, she was, and looking very pretty—in her hat—by the side of handsome Charles Heneage, in a *coupé* of the Great Western Railway, and at least fifty miles from London. Charles Heneage had written no letter on the preceding day, but that was no reason against Flora's writing one, stating her terrors, and mentioning where she would meet him next morning at five, and flinging it—as she remarked—upon the ground, for him to take up. They are a very happy couple, and Charles is making a large income, and going to be called to the bar.

But frantically enraged as was the man with the Heart in the Right Place, at his daughter getting away and being made happy, the incident

which perhaps he will remember longer is his purchase of the house in which his childhood had been spent. The kindly-hearted, generous, impulsive Chap, with the heart as aforesaid, had quarrelled with his parents at an early age,—had been turned out of their house in town, and sent to be apprenticed in the country; how he broke his indentures, and what subsequent rascallities he performed until he became blessed of Providence—rich and respected—need not be told. We know him as a wealthy man, and he says that he is a good one, and he ought to know.

Mr. Savernake happened to see that the house in which his parents, long since dead, had resided, was for sale. There it was in the advertisement, Number 45, Atherton Street, Russell Square, W. C. And there mingled with a

sort of liking to possess the house where he had been a child, a decided feeling that it was a respectable and also touching and refreshing thing to do. And finding that the house was in good condition, he bought it, and sent in upholsterers and furnishers, and in due course the mansion was all elegance and splendour, as be-seemeth a house in such a region. Mr. Saverneake and his wife moved into the new abode; and, as early as possible, he gave a great ostentatious dinner to more people than could well sit down. It was the house-warming.

The dinner went off with *éclat*, and everything was admired; and at the proper time the proper friend of the family rose to say the proper thing about congratulations to their kind host and hostess, and long might they live to enjoy the beautiful house in which, for the first time, they had dispensed their general hospitality.

Mr. Saverneake rose in full swagger. He was not a man of many words, but his Heart was in the Right Place. (*What it is.*) He was very thankful to them all for coming—he could not give them such splendid repeats as they enjoyed at home—(*Oh!*) but they had a hearty welcome, and he hoped that he should often and often see them again with their legs under his mahogany. (*Applause.*) Allusion had been made by his kind friend to the house. It had been called beautiful. It was well enough; and he didn't say that he wasn't well lodged. But that was not the thing. Why he loved the house—why it was dear to him, from kitchen to roof, was that it had been the home of his boyhood. Yes, 45, Atherton Street, had been his childhood's home. He knew every room, he might say every board in every floor, and every knot in every board. In this house a good father's counsels had often been given him; in this sacred house—in a spot he had visited—he was not ashamed to tell them—just before they came, a dear mother's tears had flowed over him. (*Sensation.*) The very number of the house had been blessed to him; 45 had been a lucky number many a time and oft. He was once more at home—he felt that every wall and rafter seemed to honour and love him, and—and—his Heart was in the Right Place. And God bless them all.

He sat down amid great enthusiasm; but what is life?

At the last moment, and to fill vacant chair, he had asked in an old gentleman of large proportions, but larger self-esteem, he having filled divers parochial offices in the district in which they stood. The old gentleman was offended at being thus asked, but came and eat his dinner, and this was the return he made.

When the applause had subsided, and the words "interesting," and "touching" and "manly," were buzzing about, as usual, the old gentleman—his name was Hepper—rose, and begged silence. His imposing appearance, and white hair, prejudiced everybody in his favour, and all looked out for a new sensation. They got one.

"Nobody," said Mr. Hepper, in the most distinct voice, while servants at the open door listened, as well as the guests,—"nobody can feel more than I do the beauty of what has fallen from our worthy host. To come back to the home of

our childhood a rich and good man is the noblest event of life. (*Great applause.*) I wish I had known our worthy host a little earlier. ("Make up for it," from Mr. Saverneake.) I should like to have known him when he was buying this house. (*Attention.*) Because—and as I was at the time the collector of rates for the street, I knew all about it—exactly six years ago, all the houses in the street were new numbered, and this, which is now 45, was, when our host was a boy, 57. I dare say he was never in this house till he bought it. However, the sentiment is the same, and does him the highest honour."

A good man struggling with a misfortune is a sight dear to the gods. As Mr. Saverneake always stated that he was a good man, anyhow, there must have been much enjoyment that night upon Olympus. There was very little in 45, Atherton Street.

SHIRLEY BROOKS.

WHERE? THERE AND THEREAFTER!

A TALE IN THREE CHAPTERS.



CHAPTER I. WHERE?

AN omnibus is passing along a road in the neighbourhood of London.

"Potmus Street, Jack!"

Jack pulls up his horses at the place indicated, and a tall, active-looking old gentleman, with a profusion of grey hair and a pair of remarkably bright blue eyes, steps into the road and turns quickly into Hippopotamus Street. He is evidently on the look-out for something or somebody, for as he goes along he keeps turning his eyes alternately to the shop windows on either side of the way. He reaches the end of the street, seemingly without attaining the object of his search. He wheels round, and retraces his steps. Presently he comes to a dead stop before a fishmonger's shop. Its proprietress, the widow Robinson, a corpulent and cantankerous-looking person, is engaged in sprinkling fresh water upon her stale soles, to the manifest improvement of their appearance in





general, and of the orange spots on their backs in particular.

"Perhaps you will be kind enough to inform me where Miss Smith the milliner resides?" asks the stranger, in a conciliatory tone which not more than one woman in a thousand could have resisted.

"Drat the fish!" exclaims the one in a thousand, giving a savage push to an unfortunate half-dead-and-alive lobster which had contrived to jerk itself a little out of its assigned position.

The stranger repeats the question. Then, and only then, does the savor of soles turn round and survey the questioner. She gives a sudden start. What can be the matter with the woman? At last she finds what the neighbours say she is rarely in want of—her tongue.

"You're inquirin' arter Smith the dressmaker?"

"Please."

"I'm told there's a party o' that name a livin'

hereabouts, but I can't inform you where. *Better ask the pleaceeman!*"

This in the gruffest of tones, and the last words accompanied by a glance of peculiar meaning.

The stranger looks round, but sees not the official referred to. He smiles and walks on. Mrs. Robinson soliloquises bitterly:—

"He's here for no good, that there man. I wonder where's that blessed pleaceeman!"

With unusual interest in the movements of that functionary, she keeps her eyes at the same time riveted on the door of the pastrycook's shop through which the stranger had just disappeared.

Let us peep after him. At the moment of his entry, blooming Mary Pattypan happens to be engaged in ascertaining the weight of a loaf for a customer. She hastily flings a piece of bread into the scale as a make-weight, then slips the loaf into the woman's basket and the money into the till, and, in the twinkling of an eye, having wiped her hands in her tasteful little apron, and pushed back her hair, she turns towards the stranger with a pleasant smile upon her rosy lips.

He inquires after the milliner.

"Four doors further up at the other side. Where you see the great sycamore tree!"

Just as Miss Mary arrives at the word "tree," something about the stranger's face seems particularly to attract her notice. Her voice quavers, and her colour becomes perceptibly heightened; she looks downwards, bites her lip, and seems to have no little difficulty in preventing her smile from broadening into the preliminaries of a laugh. The old gentleman looks sharply at her.

"Why that's a stationer's shop," he rejoins, "I passed it not two minutes ago."

"Ah, but Miss Smith has lately given up the millinery, and gone into the news line!"

"Oh, indeed! I thank you. Good day!"

And the bright-eyed old gentleman raises his hat, and the fair pastrycook performs an elaborate salute, which would have done credit to one of Her Majesty's Maids of Honour. She does not lift her eyes, however, until his back is turned, and then positively they are dancing in tears, and she is attempting to smother a hearty laugh with a dazzlingly white cambric pocket-handkerchief.

CHAPTER II. THERE.

CROSSING the little street with the big Greek name, the old gentleman walks on a few paces, and then, passing under the fine old sycamore tree, with its dark drapery of ivy, enters the stationer's shop. And bright eyes are upon him, I can tell you. Pretty Miss Pattypan, ignoring the existence of a small boy who has just crept from the door to the counter, is looking anxiously over the way.

There's the widow Robinson, too, has altogether forgotten her soles, and stands a fixture at the door of the Piscatorial Repository. What's that? Can it be possible? Why there's the venerable stranger chatting and laughing across the counter with the demure little milliner. Worse still remains behind! The lady and gentleman leave the shop to take care of itself, and entering the little parlour beyond, are lost to sight!

"Dear me, how very funny!" ejaculates Miss Pattypan.

"I wish that pleaceeman'd come by," cries the fishwife. "The street isn't safe till that man's in the station-house. And as for that dressmaker—" The fishwife was at a loss for terms of abuse, and could only perspire in her helpless perplexity.

CHAPTER III. THEREAFTER.

EVEN while the words I have just recorded are falling from the lips of the pretty pastrycook and the unlovely fishwife, our friend the old gentleman is creeping noiselessly up the stairs of the milliner's house. On reaching the first landing-place, he turns at the right hand side, towards a door which happens to be slightly ajar. Through the aperture this inquisitive old fellow instantaneously casts those bright blue eyes of his. He keeps them in that position? Well, there certainly is some excuse for that lingering gaze! Let us peep into the room! At a small circular table, near the fire-place, sits a young lady in deep mourning, and with a face such as few persons could look on without interest. Her age might be two or three and twenty. Her figure is slight and graceful, and she has a very prettily shaped head, adorned with the richest, darkest brown hair you ever saw. Her features are charmingly regular, but her face is quite colourless. Her eyes you cannot see, for they are intently fixed on some needle-work upon which her fingers are busily employed.

All at once she heaves a deep sigh, and lets the work fall from her hands.

The old gentleman, who has now drawn quite close to the door, seems strangely affected by these movements.

"Egad, I believe it's crying I am," whimpers the sentimental old goose, wiping off a tear with the back of his hand.

Then she raises her fair head, and you see a pair of large loving brown eyes, surpassingly beautiful in shape and colour, but with the mournfullest expression imaginable.

There is a portfolio on the table, and the young creature turns it over as though she were looking for some particular page. She pauses. She has found what she sought for, as you may guess by that sweet sad smile. The old gentleman is wonderfully excited by all this.

"The darling little soul, how I do long to eat her up!" murmurs the horrid old cannibal.

By this time he has got very nervous indeed, and is unconsciously fiddling with the door-handle, which happens to be a flexible one. Suddenly he gives it a violent jerk, and he has now no option but either to advance, or to sneak off. He taps at the door.

"Come in!" from the gentlest, sweetest voice in the universe.

The old gentleman advances and bows. The young lady rises, with a graceful inclination of the head.

"I beg pardon for intruding, madam, but—"

This is in a very hoarse voice; in such marked contrast, indeed, to the speaker's tones either at the pastrycook's or the fishmonger's, that one is tempted into believing that he has suddenly caught a very bad cold.

"Pray don't mention it, sir," says a soft kind

voice. "Pray, don't mention it, sir," repeat two sweet brown eyes belonging to the owner of that pleasant voice.

The person thus addressed responds to the lady's gentle words in tones still hoarser than before.

"In excuse, madam, let me state that—I'm the bear—bearer of a mes—message from—"

Oh, dear, what can the matter be? Surely the young lady's bewitched! What a change in the expression of that beautiful face! Falcon never shot forth a more piercing glance than is now emitted from those soft, dove-like eyes. She steps hurriedly forward. The old gentleman rushes to meet her. She utters a little cry.

"Harry!"

"Georgy!"

The next moment his arms are wound tightly round her. He presses her warmly to his bosom. Their lips meet, and the touch is assuredly not an uncertain one. Then she looks at him through eyes blinded with happy tears. He fondly passes his hand over her rich brown hair, and kisses her eyes and forehead several times. For some minutes scarce a word is spoken. At length Georgy, wiping the tears from her eyes, looks again into the old gentleman's face. With a silvery laugh she starts from his arms, and taking him by the hand, leads him before the mirror. What a picture! A whisker, large, bushy, and of the badger's hue, has all but fallen from the visitor's right jaw, and a very notable grey wig, of dimensions almost gigantic, has slipped quite to one side, while a profusion of bright brown hair, with an invincible tendency to curl, has resumed its rightful position. Another second, and off goes the wig, yea, flies to the other end of the room, and young Harry Albright's himself again, and the reader knows the cause of the pastrycook's merriment and the fishwife's suspicions.

While the lovers are putting and answering questions, now talking sadly of the dead, now discussing little plans for the future—at this crisis it is my duty to explain matters.

Harry Albright and Georgina Sinclair had been attached to each other from babyhood. Harry, when a mere infant, had lost both his parents, and become altogether dependent on a wealthy but penurious old uncle. Georgina's father, a lieutenant in the navy, had died when she was but a little girl, leaving his widow and child unprovided for, save by the pittance doled out by a generous Government to the reliefs of deceased officers. Mrs. Sinclair, who had been acquainted in early life with Harry's father, took a deep interest in the poor boy's fate. As he grew up, he manifested such sterling qualities that he quite wound himself round her heart; and had he been her own son she could scarcely have loved him better. She regarded with an approving eye and a thankful spirit the tender affection which subsisted between her daughter and Harry; and the course of these young people's true love would in all likelihood have run on with the most delightful smoothness, had it not been for that terrible *res angusta domi*—the rock upon which so many fond hearts have been wrecked. Harry at an early age had been placed by his uncle in an attorney's office, with a plain intimation from that rela-

tive that nothing further was to be expected at his hands. On attaining the age of eighteen, the poor fellow found himself in the receipt of a splendid salary of fifteen shillings per week, with the magnificent prospect before him of being able, after ten more years of toil and moil, to earn double that very fine income hebdomadally. Strange to relate, Harry began to get very discontented with his present position and probable future. He looked about him in all directions, and at last determined on taking a bold step. Just then news had reached Europe of the discovery of the new El Dorado; and one sunny morning our hero kissed the tears out of Georgina's eyes, received the poor widow's blessing, and shouldering his knapsack set off sturdily for the Gold Fields of the Far West. Amongst the young man's brightest anticipations, was the prospect of soon being able to surround with substantial comforts that generous old friend who had been more than a mother to him. Alas! he was destined never more to behold that kind old face! Mrs. Sinclair died suddenly a few months after his departure from England. At first Harry fared but indifferently in his mining operations; but he corresponded regularly with Georgina, and always wrote cheerfully as to what the future had in store for them both; insisting on the absolute certainty of his ultimately scraping together enough to make them comfortable all their days. While writing in this fashion, the poor fellow was half-starving himself in order that he might forward occasional remittances to his wife elect, who, since her mother's death, had been mainly dependent for a livelihood on small sums obtained for executing jobs in fancy work, and for giving lessons in French and music. Towards the close of the second year, however, Harry lighted upon a large vein of the precious metal, and by a few months of hard labour secured a competence for life. The work completed, he sailed for England. Now, young Albright was one of those good kind souls who delight above all things in giving people pleasant surprises, and had not written to let Georgy know that he was coming back.

Some little time before he quitted the gold regions, his beloved, having been promised some pupils in the neighbourhood of Hippopotamus Street, had shifted her quarters thither, and written to let her lover know. But by the day her letter had traversed the ocean, Harry was half-way home. On reaching London, and inquiring for Georgina at her old lodgings, he was directed to the little milliner's. The number of the house they had forgotten. A sudden thought now struck Harry, and, repairing to Bow Street, he promptly arrayed himself in a grey wig, grey whiskers, and other disguises. On ferreting out Miss Smith, he revealed to her the little plot he had concocted; and the kind little soul, entering cordially into the working out thereof, pushed under the wig the bright stray curls which had already bewildered "Potinus" Street, and gently opening the parlour door, silently motioned the conquering hero up-stairs. [I think that I have now with the most painstaking minuteness cleared up every scrap of mystery—completely disentangled every thread.]

Let me state, in conclusion, that the young pair—a few incidents in whose history I have been doing my poor best to put on paper—were married within a month of the events I have recorded. Furthermore, that the union was a most felicitous one. And, lastly, that I, who have the honour and happiness to be numbered amongst their friends, have again and again enjoyed a hearty laugh with Mr. Albright and his admirable wife over the details of the great and terrible “wiggling” administered by him to the petticoated denizens of Hippopotamus Street on the afternoon of the ever-memorable third of May, eighteen hundred and fifty-one.

S. LANGLEY.

